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Choice of Schools in Six Nations

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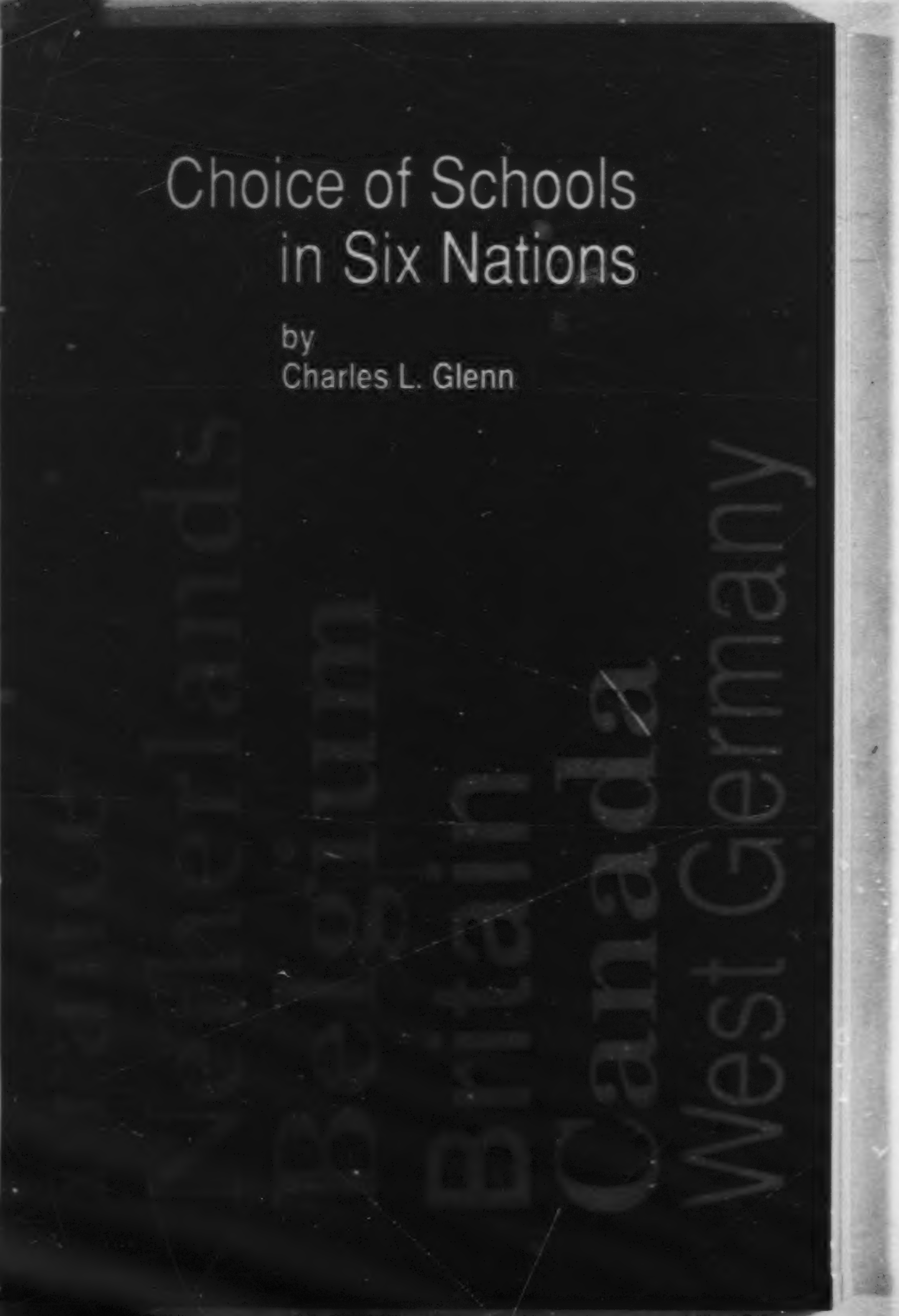

Choice of Schools in Six Nations

by
Charles L. Glenn

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Introduction by the Secretary of Education

It is my belief that the cornerstone for education reform in this country lies with the policy of school choice. American history validates the concept of free choice: choice in representative government, choice in the marketplace, choice in higher education. Yet we allow our elementary and secondary system of education to founder in mediocrity without making a commitment to parental choice at this level of education. This must change.

If we consult the rich experience of other Western democracies in providing for parental choice of schools, we are certain to clarify our own thoughts on this issue, as well as to gain a perspective on how choice fits into our history and cultural situation. We can grow in wisdom and better inform policy debates by consulting the experience of others.

With this consideration, I present Dr. Charles L. Glenn's examination of parental choice in six Western democracies. As the studies in this book demonstrate, choice deeply affects education and the character of schooling itself. Glenn's scholarship examines not what might happen, but what has happened in other democracies when families exercise choice.

Evidence shows that the growing demand for parental choice in the United States derives not simply from a desire for improved test scores, but from changing perspectives on liberty and equity. It flows from an urgent reconsideration of the role of the family and of other institutions and associations that mediate between the individual and the State.

Choice empowers families at a time when many people feel powerless and helpless before large, impersonal bureaucracies. Choice gives a sense of responsible stewardship to parents and students, as well as to teachers and administrators. When families choose a school, parents and students become discerning consumers with a sense of proprietorship for the product they have selected.

Choice also encourages distinctiveness and differentiation among schools. This leads to the development of schools with a specific character, climate, and flavor to appeal to the different learning styles of students. With these accompanying attractions, choice reduces dropout rates, increases teachers' satisfaction, and encourages parental involvement and accountability.

Any strategy of expanded parental choice that produces such dramatic enhancements should be encouraged. We must also acknowledge that, although a key to true reform, choice alone is no panacea for the problems of American education. Furthermore, any approach to school improvement brings new challenges, but these difficulties should not be used as an excuse for inaction. We can work through the complications and improve the product rather than dismiss its potential while waiting for the always elusive perfect solution.

Concerns have been voiced that expanded choice may promote a two-tiered system of education, that is, one for the fortunate and another for the disadvantaged. It is blind not to recognize that inequities exist in our schools today and that choice can be exercised in an effective and responsible manner to remedy that situation. With choice, school administrators become entrepreneurs looking for ways to improve their product to attract learners. Armed with the power of choice, parents have forced inferior schools to upgrade or close.

No child in the United States should have to attend a second-rate school. If children are in a chronically failing school where they are not learning and where they are in danger of dropping out, and if another school can do a better job, why should parents not be allowed to choose the better school? It is a matter of right, and not just a matter of privilege or discretion, to be accorded the opportunity to seek the best education for our children.

We have seen some improvement in American education since the release in 1983 of *A Nation At Risk*, the landmark report on the state of our educational system. I applaud those who have moved ahead on education reform in their schools, thereby improving student performance. I do not believe, however, that the changes have been comprehensive enough to overcome the serious problems in education. School choice can help rectify this situation. We cannot be satisfied until all our children are educated to their fullest potential.

President Bush has said, "When some of our students actually have trouble locating America on a map of the world, it is time for us to cut through bureaucracy. We must help those schools that need help most. We must give choice to parents, students, teachers and principals."

The compiled essays on choice presented by Dr. Glenn will clarify our thought and aid in a fuller formulation and implementation of public policy on choice.

LAURO F. CAVAZOS
Secretary of Education

Foreword

From the cars we drive to the TV shows we watch (or don't watch) to where we work or where we worship, our right in this country to choose what we deem best for ourselves and for our families drives virtually every aspect of our lives. There is, however, one important exception. One decision, though having an enormous impact on the lives of children, remains beyond the reach of many American parents. In most States and jurisdictions, the decision of which school their child will attend is made *for* families; children attend schools to which they are assigned instead of schools their families have chosen.

Most Americans want that changed. A 1987 Gallup poll found that 71 percent of the public wanted parents to "have the right to choose the local schools their children attend." Polls show the idea to be even more popular among parents, especially minority parents. Each year here in Washington, newspapers tell of hundreds of families in nearby Prince Georges County, Maryland, camping out in lines—some as early as a week before registration day—to secure for their children coveted slots in the county's magnet schools.

Several years ago, Minnesota became the first State to offer parents and students across the State their choice among public schools. This year, 3 States (Arkansas, Iowa, and Nebraska) have passed similar legislation, and at least 15 other States are weighing choice measures.

President Bush and Secretary Cavazos have been tireless advocates of parental choice in education. Weeks before the President took office, he and the Secretary spoke for educational choice at a White House Conference on Choice in Education. The Secretary has since created a task force of U.S. Department of Education officials, and charged them to promote and evaluate parental choice programs. And, he has been chairing a series of regional meetings on choice this fall.

Here in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), we recently published a guide for parents on how to choose a school, *Choosing a School for Your Child* (available from the Consumer Information Center, Department 597V, Pueblo, Colorado 81009).

As head of OERI, the Nation's main agency for conducting educational research, I've watched public-school choice grow from a mere blip on the screen to become the fastest moving issue on the education-policy horizon. Choice is on the fast track because it is a policy that serves to advance educational improvements of various kinds and two ideals of American education in particular: educational *equality* and educational *quality*.

Despite charges by some that choice plans could upset ethnic balances and thus result in racial resegregation, policymakers have been careful to craft choice policies to safeguard against that possibility. "Virtually every plan under consideration this year," according to William Snider of *Education Week*, "would ban student transfers that would interfere with existing school-desegregation efforts." Actual experience of programs already in place around the country (in New York; Los Angeles; Cambridge, Massachusetts; and elsewhere) have shown that choice is anything but divisive.

These and other choice programs across the country—magnet schools, alternative schools, and open enrollment plans—have proven successful in promoting educational quality. Among the reasons: choice gives schools an incentive to discover what works best for them, for parents, and for students. Built on the idea that there is no "one best method" for educating all children, choice encourages *all* schools to do what heretofore only our most effective schools have done: to "personalize" instruction, to establish high expectations for all students, to communicate those expectations clearly to everyone in the school and community, to do whatever it takes to make sure that every child meets those expectations, and to engage parents in the education of their children. We know from research that "schools of choice" (as opposed to schools to which families are assigned) tend to specialize—that is, to develop special strengths in curricula, instructional techniques, or other dimensions of schooling.

Under open-enrollment plans (where families are allowed to choose among *all* public schools in a city or local area), *every* school in the plan may develop a particular strength, thus expanding the educational diversity available to families. This variety gives parents a reason to seek the school best suited to their children's needs and to what (or how) they want their children to learn.

That match is important. It brings schools and families together for a common and an explicit purpose. It can help overcome the indifference, the "he's-not-my-problem, he's-*your*-problem" attitude that stands in the way of effective collaboration between the school and the home.

Choice gives students a *reason* for going to a school. When attending a particular school by choice, students are less likely to see themselves as "biding their time" till graduation; they tend to see more purpose in going to school. This purposefulness (or a lack of it) can be felt in a school's halls and classrooms; it can be seen on the faces of students and teachers.

School climate, a critical indicator of school quality, improves measurably when students choose to go there. The very fact that they and their families have chosen their school tends to increase students' willingness to do homework, study hard, read good books, discuss ideas in class and at home. This willingness to give schoolwork an all-out effort is essential to learning. And this willingness, unfortunately, is conspicuously absent from much of American education today.

Choice can help supply that missing ingredient. It can (and often does) stimulate schools to pursue excellence and to cultivate quality leadership, teaching, and learning. Mary Anne Raywid, a Hofstra University professor who has examined more than 100 school-choice plans, found that principals in schools of choice "tend to function as leaders, not just as managers"; that teachers in these schools consider their work less "custodial" and more "professional" than do teachers in schools of assignment; and that students in schools chosen by them and their parents generally feel more commitment to their studies and schoolwork.

It's not surprising, then, that these students learn more. In the years following the establishment of a district-wide open-enrollment program in New York City's District 4 in East Harlem, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level quadrupled. Similar improvements have resulted from choice programs in Buffalo, New York; Montclair, New Jersey; and elsewhere.

What is perhaps most notable about choice programs heretofore implemented in the United States is that they have improved schools for youngsters who stand the most to gain from improved schools—that is, children from low-income families. Eighty percent of the students in New York's District 4, for instance, come from homes qualifying for free or reduced-cost lunches. Economically disadvantaged and minority youngsters are predominant in populations of many of the communities where choice has helped boost student learning.

Thus, I am delighted that OERI was able to support Charles

Glenn's study of parental choice in six other countries. His detailed account of the educational choices available to parents in other countries (as well as the attendant educational successes and difficulties there) provides lessons about how choice can be made to work in American communities. In Dr. Glenn's report, we see that parental choices motivated by religious conviction are routinely accommodated in other Western democracies. We see that in other countries, when children from diverse backgrounds are brought together, these youngsters learn successfully alongside one another—and *from* each other—circumstances that call to mind our own American ideal of the "common school."

It is my hope that, by casting educational choice in an international light, this report will enable parents, teachers, policymakers, and other Americans to understand—and harness as an engine of educational change—what promises to be among the most potent forces in American education in the 1990s.

CHRISTOPHER T. CROSS
Assistant Secretary
Office of Educational Research
and Improvement

Preface

There is an academic discipline called "comparative education," with a journal, scholarly meetings, and all the rest; it is concerned with the systematic study of differences and similarities among systems of education worldwide.

This survey is not, in that sense, a study in comparative education, nor am I qualified to write such a study. I am a State official, and my interest in the goals of education and how it is organized in other States and countries is shaped not by scientific method but by policy considerations.

I am, that is to say, interested in those aspects of other systems directly relevant to challenges that education is facing in Massachusetts—and in other States where I have served as a consultant—with particular attention to the solutions that one nation or another has found to our common problems. One such common area of concern is the role that parent choice should play in publicly funded education.

Three aspects of parent choice seem to me particularly interesting to a practitioner. The first is its historical background, not only the struggles and compromises through which particular arrangements came into being but also the *resonance* of the issue of parent choice for a society. Just as the arrangements differ—and require description—so do the meanings attached to them.

The second aspect of parent choice I have dealt with here is the (very scarce) empirical research—in particular, research on the reasons why parents make decisions about a school for their children. The attention I have given to the Netherlands, Belgian Flanders and Scotland is based, in part, on the availability of such research.

A final aspect of parent choice of special interest in various countries is any current debates over whether it should be extended or curtailed. Such debate draws upon not only practical considerations but also fears and hopes about the society and its particular tension between liberty and unity. Often in recent decades the identity of alternative schools has been at issue as well, as the old certainties have succumbed to the acids of secularization with an accompanying loss of meaning. The battle over educational liberty may go on, but its front lines have shifted decisively.

The focus of this study is on education in the developed Western democracies. Events in these systems have followed a scenario the different forms of which are instructive to American education. Only in these societies has the interplay occurred between a State-mandated program of universal education and a recognition, by the State, of the right of parents to have their children educated in other than the officially established system.

Twenty-five national education systems were reviewed for this study, but in only six cases has the information I gathered permitted me to give a reasonably full account of the background and current policy debates. A few other countries—Australia, Spain, Denmark and Israel—might be included at equal length to provide an adequate account of the issue worldwide. Discussion of parent choice has begun recently in Sweden, a significant reversal for that country. And, of course, there is the United States, where expanded parent choice is advocated by many education reformers and strongly resisted by most of the education establishment.

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Introduction

Parent choice of schooling has attracted supporters and opponents from across the ideological spectrum; positions are less predictable, it seems, than in any other area of contemporary policy debate. In a single randomly selected issue of the *Times Educational Supplement* (London: August 28, 1987), three brief stories testify to this confusion.

The first article reports on a nationwide poll indicating that nearly half of the parents interviewed—and 36 percent of the Labour voters—would send their children to private schools if they could afford it.

The second article, on the same page, describes local government policy moving in precisely the opposite direction: "The one-time Conservative stronghold of Trafford will lose its grammar schools, single-sex and Church of England voluntary aided schools in one fell swoop if a new reorganization scheme is approved by the Education Secretary. Labour and Liberal councillors who now hold the balance of power . . . plan to replace the schools with comprehensives. But the proposals will undoubtedly be opposed by parents—particularly Muslims—who want their children to attend single-sex schools."

The third article reports that the leading educational spokesperson of the Social Democratic Party had called for a school voucher scheme ("weighted" to benefit poor children) that could be used at State schools and at participating independent schools.

Such policy confusion over the extent to which parents should be able to determine the education that their children will receive is equally present in other Western nations, including the United States. It is important to go beyond a legal and economic analysis of school choice proposals to consider their political, social, and educational implications. Only such a broader consideration can do justice to the powerful emotions that proposals either to expand or to restrict choice have aroused in recent years. A few examples:

- Millions of French parents participated in a series of mass demonstrations, in 1984, against the proposals of the Socialist government to bring state-aided private schools within a unified national system. Many observers considered this controversy a powerful impetus to the conservative victory in March 1986.

- Spanish parents took part in similar demonstrations in 1984 against moves by that nation's Socialist government to extend more direct control over Catholic schools.
- The long-term Social Democratic domination of the German State of Hesse was overturned in late 1986, largely because of parental opposition to government moves to further restrict differentiation within public education at the intermediate level.
- The British Conservative Party won in 1987 with an election program in which extension of parental choice—already strengthened by the Conservatives in 1981—was a major element.
- Belgian parents of students in traditional Catholic schools rallied in Antwerp in late 1987 to protest a national mandate that all tax-supported secondary schools adopt a comprehensive structure.

In such controversies a common assumption of many observers is that middle-class parents are seeking or defending school choice to insulate their children from poor and minority children. This book will examine the evidence for and against this assumption.

In other cases, however, it is minority parents who are seeking more control over the education their children receive, often in ways that may work against their children's future participation in the wider society. In West Berlin, for example, Turkish parents have called for support of supplemental Koran schools, and have met strong opposition from the teachers' union and especially from the secularized Turkish professional teachers. The same issue has arisen in the Netherlands, where both Hindu and Moslem parents have taken advantage of constitutional guarantees of educational freedom to gain approval of separate schools, and in Britain.

These are thorny issues, then, and it may be tempting to treat them superficially (as in the United States) as matters of legal interpretation or funding policy. The passions that these issues arouse, however, and the particular responses in the policy and practice of each educational system, can be understood only in the perspective of history and social development.

It will not do to see government monopoly and allocation of schooling—as in totalitarian societies—as the norm and parent choice as an aberration. "Educational freedom" is indeed a slogan and a political program in each of the nations to be considered, but so is "the public common school."

James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer have written that

> throughout American history, there have been two different orientations toward schooling. These two orientations have created a dilemma for educational policy that has never been satisfactorily resolved, nor precisely stated. A direct confrontation of these orientations can be a step toward resolving the dilemma in a way that will benefit America and its children.
>
> The first orientation sees schools as society's instrument for releasing a child from the blinders imposed by accident of birth into this family or that family. Schools have been designed to open broad horizons to the child, transcending the limitations of the parents, and have taken children from disparate cultural backgrounds into the mainstream of American culture. They have been a major element in social mobility, freeing children from the poverty of their parents and the low status of their social origins. They have been a means of stripping away identities of ethnicity and social origin and implanting a common American identity.
>
> As the first orientation has been the basis for public schooling in America, a second orientation has been the basis for private schools. This second orientation to schooling sees a school as an extension of the family, reinforcing the family's values. . . . The school is, in this orientation, an efficient means for transmitting the culture of the community from the older generation to the younger. It helps create the next generation in the image of the preceding one. (Coleman & Hoffer 1987, 3–4)

This description is generally accurate as well for the six nations considered here, and the current policy debates are carried out in the terms that Coleman and Hoffer state so succinctly. The *resonance* of these issues can only be understood, however, by adding a third orientation, now almost passed from the scene but not without having contributed to the passion with which the debates are conducted. This third orientation sees education as the means by which a religious institution shapes the beliefs and loyalties of the children of its adherents.

Education in Europe was born out of the Church, whether Catholic or Lutheran or Reformed or Anglican, and it was a central element of the Enlightenment program of the 18th century to break the power of the Church by seizing control of education in the name of the State. This intention received its purest political expression in the measures adopted (though never effectively implemented) in France during the 1790s, under the Jacobins and then the Directory. Throughout the 19th century, European liberals and republicans saw themselves, at least with respect to education, as heirs to the French Revolution and as locked in the same struggle with the Church. The State monopoly of schooling, as expressed in the common elementary (and, gradually, secondary) school, seemed to them a matter of the most fundamental importance. They were confirmed in this belief, in those nations with a large Catholic population, by the intransigence of the papacy in rejecting all forms of Modernism, including democracy.

These struggles could be safely relegated to the history books did they not continue to shape the way in which non-governmental schooling, especially that with a religious character, tends to be seen by education policymakers. The fact is that the churches have shown little stomach recently for a battle over schooling, and Catholic and Protestant schools in Europe, by and large, go easy on doctrinal teaching.

"Educational freedom" as it was understood in the debates of the 19th century was essentially the freedom of the churches and other institutions and individuals to establish and operate schools, usually with some form of government subsidy in exchange for meeting various requirements. "Educational freedom" today, in a change which has been developing since World War II, refers primarily to the freedom of parents to choose a particular school or form of education for their children. Their motivation may be loyalty to a religious institution, but it may also be a desire for a particular type of curriculum or language of instruction. Thus, the second orientation described by Coleman and Hoffer is a relatively new development; the front has changed decisively in the struggle over the common school, and educational policymakers in each country have been slow to respond.

The primary adversary of the monolithic State as educator is no longer the monolithic Church as educator, with its rival claims; now it is individual families as consumers of educational services who shape the issue. They often behave in what are (to an educational bureaucracy) unpredictable ways according to the idiosyncratic logic of their diverse values and priorities, and their fears and hopes for their children.

Those who determine educational policy in the United States have tended, as have policymakers in Europe, to respond to this new reality, this determination of parents to act as consumers, with a rhetoric and a way of seeing the issues shaped by the struggles of the 19th century. That is, they tend to see themselves as locked in battle with an aggressive Church, although in most cases even the Catholic Church has been dragged reluctantly into the current debates by the militancy of parents.

In the United States in recent years, the concerns of small groups of religiously conservative parents to control the education of their children has evoked, from the defenders of the educational status quo, fevered warnings of a new Inquisition, of plots to destroy public schooling and to divide a society in which, allegedly, religious toleration now prevails.

Religion is not the only basis on which choice is exercised by parents, with or without an officially sanctioned system to promote and regulate it. Many parents whose resources made it possible have always sought an education for their children that would ensure them extra advantages or insulate them at a formative age from the influence of their social class inferiors. Such arrangements appear to be universal, in Socialist states as well as in those whose capitalist economic systems encourage the purchase of desired services.

This book is not, however, a study of private education as such, but rather of efforts to extend a measure of choice to parents of all social levels, including "letting poor parents act responsibly" (Glenn 1987). The rationale may involve

1. choice based upon a desire for education informed by a particular religious or "world view" perspective;
2. choice based upon vocational goals, in the broadest sense, often including some measure of social class maintenance or aspiration;
3. choice based upon a desire for a particular type of pedagogy (often associated with one of the first two, but sometimes quite independent of either); or
4. (a sub-set, perhaps, of the third) choice based upon the desire to maintain a particular minority language or culture.

The second of these dimensions of choice comes into play above all at the secondary level. The issues of comprehensive versus selective schools, and tracking (or streaming) within comprehensive schools, would warrant extensive discussion in their own right. In some cases (Belgian Flanders, for example), publicly supported Catholic education has remained a bastion of the selective principle which has been at least substantially eliminated from schools operated directly by government. In Scotland, by contrast, the Catholic secondary schools have embraced the comprehensive approach as fully as have local government schools.

This study does not deal at any length with the debates over selective secondary schooling, except when they come naturally into the narrative. These debates are heated just now in several of the nations discussed. One might question whether, in any system, the spaces in the more prestigious schools or tracks are allocated on purely meritocratic grounds. Here, too, an element of "parent choice"—not to say manipulation—comes into play. Research in Northern Ireland has suggested that whether students of comparable ability manage to get into the more selective programs has a significant impact upon their subsequent expectations and performance (Sutherland and Gallagher 1987).

In short, it would be interesting and relevant to include "choices" on the basis of academic and vocational programs at the secondary level in this survey, but these topics would require such extensive additional discussion as to be highly impractical.

France

Parental Choice in French Education

Conflict over the control of education, and over its content, has surfaced in ever new forms in France for the past 200 years. The arguments advanced there have been influential across Europe and in the Americas as well. The French experience is worth understanding in its own right, but it serves also as essential background to the policy debates over the common school and educational freedom that break out periodically in many nations.

It was in France that the republicans who gained control of the Revolution in 1792 enacted the first educational legislation of modern times based upon the radical principles that the child belonged to the State, that parents were if anything a hindrance to the State's mission of shaping its future citizens, and that the Church, because of its rival (and older) claim to educate, was a bitter enemy of the State. In the 1880s, the French government, calling directly upon this "Jacobin" precedent, carried out an aggressive program of penetrating every village to undermine the influence of parish priests (seen as anti-republican and a hindrance to progress) and to replace it with that of schoolteachers.

In France, also, the arguments for educational freedom, the rights of parents, and the necessity of religion in a sound schooling were also articulated fully by Catholic thinkers from La Mennais in the early 19th century through Montalembert and Dupanloup and down to the present. The struggle to defend Catholic education against the aggression of the French government helped to harden the opposition of the papacy (and thus, in turn, of Catholic leadership in the United States and other nations) to State-controlled schooling. Efforts of American Catholic leaders like Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota in the 1890s to reach an accommodation with the public school system were unavailing in the face of positions formulated in the French context. The tremendous development of Catholic schooling in the United States, then, must be understood against the background of European controversies, for which those in France set the pattern.

When Socialist leader Francois Mitterand met, in 1977, with representatives of those elements in the Catholic Church anxious to achieve a breakthrough in their relationship with the Socialists, he was told that "the education question is carved into this country as the last symbol of the confrontation between two Frances; it remains the irritating obstacle that prevents the resolution of the last differences between the Left and the Church" (Leclerc 1985, 15).

Mitterand had no olive branch to offer; he would refer to the supporters of Catholic education as stubborn adversaries. The policy of the Socialist Party was and would continue to be that France needed a single system of education, expressing a secular world view. [No single English word translates adequately the French laïc/laïque. I have used "anti-clerical" when the reference is to a political or social agenda, and "secular" when it is to a school or program. See Remond 1976; M. Ozouf 1982, 34n.]

True to his word, Mitterand's government moved, in the early 1980s, to extend its control over publicly funded private schooling and so precipitated a political crisis that contributed to the Socialist defeat in the 1986 elections.

The special resonance in France of controversies over education and parent choice—and, from France, to much of the world—can be understood only from a historical perspective. The succeeding French Republics, often facing an internal opposition and lacking the easy legitimacy of a monarchy, made claims upon the minds and hearts of "their" children that could accept no rival claims by the Church. The Church that French governments faced made far more absolute claims than did the established Protestant churches of England or the German states. The conflict was inevitable.

The Republic and "Its" Children

Mitterand's position can claim an extensive ancestry. Universal popular education concerned primarily with shaping common attitudes and loyalties was high on the agenda of political theorists in France in the 18th century. The leaders of the French Revolution, particularly in its more radical phase that began in 1793, wanted urgently to enact a scheme of State-controlled schooling. The town and village schools that, in an unsystematic way, had taught literacy and the essentials of Catholic doctrine to hundreds of thousands of students under the Old Regime must be replaced by "republican schools" whose primary concern would be with the formation of loyal citizens.

In support of this objective, the Decree Concerning Public Instruction of 29 Frimaire, Year II (December 19, 1793)—during the Terror—placed schools under the surveillance of local Watch Committees, and called for the denunciation of teachers whose teaching was "contrary to republican laws and morality." Succeeding governments devoted much of their attention, even when France was reeling from foreign invasion and civil war, to defining the objectives and requirements of popular education and commissioned textbooks that would present a new republican orthodoxy.

The expectations for this republican education were high. "It is the role of teachers to complete and to confirm forever the French Revolution! . . . What glory awaits those who fulfil it worthily!" wrote one local school committee, while another proclaimed that "to enlighten the people is to destroy kings!" (Babeau 1881, 68). And Maximilien Robespierre, the leader of the radical faction in power, told the National Convention that he was "convinced of the necessity of operating a total regeneration, and, if I may express myself in this way, of creating a new people" (Blum 1986, 193).

The intentions of the revolutionary leadership of the French Republic for its schools are epitomized in a celebrated speech by radical leader Georges Jacques Danton to the National Convention, in which he declared that it was

> time to re-establish the grand principle, which seems too much misunderstood, that children belong to the Republic more than they do to their parents. . . . We must say to parents: we are not snatching them away from you, your children, but you may not withhold them from the influence of the Nation. And what can the interests of an individual matter to us beside national interests? . . . It is in national schools that children must suck republican milk. The Republic is one and indivisible; public instruction must also be related to this center of unity. (Pierre 1881, 70)

These efforts undertaken on this basis succeeded in devastating the extensive (though by no means universal) network of Catholic schools developed under the Old Regime, but they were a complete failure at putting a republican—and anti-religious—system in its place. Parents mounted a massive resistance to republican education, sending their children instead to alternative and illegal schools that provided religious instruction.

In the face of this resistance, the theme of compelling parents to enroll their children in republican schools appeared again and again in government documents, though as general chaos grew little was done to put it into practice. Nothing more clearly reveals the insecurity of a regime which, while claiming to represent the People, was in fact dominated by what sociologist Alvin Gouldner describes as "radicalized intellectuals" (Gouldner 1979, 60). The People would have to be educated to be worthy of their new Liberty, whether they wished to be or not. As a leading orator argued, it was only logical for the Revolution to make attendance in its schools obligatory, in the name of Liberty itself. After all, if parents "are friends of the present order of things, they will conform to the laws which it has established and will not recoil from confiding their children to republican teachers; if they are its enemies, I fail to see how you could claim for them a liberty which they would only abuse!" (Babeau 1881, 154).

An emphasis upon the political consequences of permitting parents to choose schools which educated on the basis of the religious "prejudices" from which the parents themselves needed to be awakened was a common theme of government documents in this period, much more so than a concern about whether reading or writing was being taught adequately. For example, the administration of the Department of the Seine (Paris and vicinity) called for a rigorous inspection of schools. "Otherwise," it was feared, "there will be two sorts of education in the Republic: in the public schools, our children will be raised on the principles of pure morality and republicanism; in private schools, they will suck the prejudices of superstition and of intolerance; thus the diversity of opinions, fanaticism, hatred will perpetuate themselves from generation to generation" (Pierre 1881, 71).

The government of the Directory (1795–1799), although it brought to an end the lawlessness and near anarchy of the Terror, was no less determined to carry out what could be called the "cultural" objectives of the Revolution, including its radical education program. No effort was spared to convey a sense of urgency about the enforcement of educational policy. As one leader wrote to local officials, in the fevered rhetoric characteristic of the period,

> It will only be by such zeal and by constant surveillance that you will be able to snatch republican education from that sort of nullity into which the enemies of the laws and of the government have worked to plunge it to date, and give a final blow to those monstrous institutions in which royalism and superstition still agitate against the genius of liberty and of philosophy. It is against these lairs of royal and superstitious fanaticism, where greedy speculators smother in their vile and sordid bias the precious seeds of republican virtues and rob the Fatherland of its fondest hopes in the coming generation, that the Directory sum-

> mons all your vigilance and your activity. (Duruy 1882, 348)

Discouraging reports were received from all areas when First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte sent out a number of top administrators to assess the success of the measures taken by the Directory to implement a system of popular education. They concluded that the efforts of the previous regime had been doomed to failure because its efforts defied the convictions of parents. One of the administrators observed that the failure to execute the law resulted from "the lack of moral education which conformed to the prejudices and habits of parents" (Duruy 1882, 178).

The Republic's Political Agenda for the School

The French Revolution was political far more than it was social or economic, and the primary agenda of its schools was correspondingly political. The goal was to create patriots, loyalists, fervent republicans; their literacy or more advanced skills were of comparatively slight importance. The reliance of "republican" education on quasi-religious observances designed to enhance civic virtue, the compulsory use of prescribed textbooks exalting the Revolution, and the anxiety of the government about Catholic teachers who might have other loyalties than the Republic, show how seriously this effort was taken to guarantee the remaking of the French people through their children.

The motivation was essentially very little different from that of the Catholic Church in setting up its schools under the Old Regime: to bring up children in the Faith, in the expectation that they would continue faithful adults. It was precisely the similarity of the goals of the Church and the Republic that set the stage for the conflicts over education that have troubled France, intermittently, ever since. After all, if the sole concern of the State were to ensure that its citizens possessed a variety of communication and computation skills, it would have no quarrel with the Church operating schools that combined these objectives with an entirely different but not conflicting agenda. This is in fact how education developed and continues—though in attenuated form as a result of societal secularization—to operate in Great Britain. But when the State is concerned to win the hearts of its citizens and sees divisions of belief and values as profoundly threatening, there can be nothing but war between it and any religious community which will not surrender the hearts of its children willingly. So it was to be in France.

Even after the revolutionary impulse faded—for a time—the successive French governments continued to think of education as primarily an instrument of political formation, whether the objective of this formation was essentially conservative or progressive. Thus Francois Guizot, who would later serve as minister of public instruction and then as premier under the regime of King Louis Philippe (1830–1848), wrote in 1821, "In fact the real means of government are not the direct and visible instruments of the exercise of power. They dwell in the heart of society itself and cannot be separated from it. . . . The internal means of government . . . are my concern" (quoted in Rosanvallon 1985, 37).

The art of government in modern society, Guizot argued, required using the inner workings of society itself. Government must interact with the interests, the passions, the opinions by which the masses are truly governed; it must be "anchored in the needs and forces which seem destined to determine the future fate of all." Thus, as he would argue in 1844 when serving as premier, "The State obviously needs a great lay body, a great association deeply united to society, knowing it well, living at its heart, united also to the State, owing its power and direction to the State, such a corporation exercising on youth that moral influence which shapes it to order, to rules" (Rosanvallon 1985, 232–33).

The "corporation" of public school teachers offered the government the advantages without the drawbacks of the religious teaching orders and the network of parish clergy, since public school teachers could be made directly responsible to the State itself. As early as 1816 Guizot had written that he and his allies wanted "a teaching corps belonging to the State, fed by the State, receiving its impulse and direction from the royal authority. . . . It is essential to establish and strengthen the ties of the teaching corps to the State."

Unlike the other forms of State action at the village level, the extension of popular education was an attempt not to take something from the people (their money and their sons) but to *affect* the people, to make them different, to carry out a program of social change. The attempt was at once more benevolent and more deeply intrusive.

Guizot expressed this intention perfectly when he wrote that "the great problem of modern societies is the government of minds."

> It has frequently been said in the last century, and it is often repeated now, that minds ought not to be fettered, that they should be left to their free operation, and that society has neither the right nor the necessity of interference. Experience has protested against this haughty and precipitate solution. It has shown what it was to suffer

> minds to be unchecked. . . . For the advantage of progress, as well as for good order in society, a certain government of minds is always necessary. (Guizot 1860, 3:14)

In the 1830s, Guizot sought, in support of this objective, to enlist schoolmasters as the agents of the State in every community, overseen by inspectors whose authority derived directly from the central government. To ensure that teachers would carry out the program of moral education he believed so essential to social peace, Guizot organized teacher training institutions modeled on those long operated by Catholic teaching orders. "Formerly," Guizot wrote,

> the church alone possessed the control of minds. . . . All this is over. Intelligence and science have become expanded and secularized. . . . But precisely because they are now more laical, more powerful, and more free than formerly, intelligence and science could never remain beyond the government of society. . . . The government should not remain careless or ignorant of the moral development of succeeding generations, and . . . as they appear upon the scene, it should study to establish intimate ties between them and the state." (Guizot, 3:14–16)

Although dressed out in the rhetoric of liberalism rather than in the radical terms used by the Jacobins in 1792, the program implemented by Guizot and his allies in the period of "liberal monarchy" from 1830 to 1848 was equally concerned to use popular education to extend the influence and control of the central State over its people (see Gontard 1959; Brush 1974).

With the fall of Louis Philippe in 1848, the more radical wing of the Republicans who gained power under the short-lived Second Republic understood that education could serve their political goals as well as it could those of their opponents. Having extended the electorate from 250,000 to more than 9 million men, the Republicans were keenly aware that the conservatism of the rural population could be their undoing, as indeed it would prove to be. Thus Hippolyte Carnot, minister of public instruction, told his colleagues in the National Assembly that "the inauguration of universal suffrage imposed on me, as my first duty, the prompt development of primary instruction, in order that a large number of citizens might understand the interests of the country." Carnot proposed to make primary education free and compulsory, and to further centralize control over teachers. In a circular to teachers just before the decisive elections he urged them to go among the people and explain to them what to look for in a "good representative." In support of this effort, Carnot called upon regional education authorities to prepare "Republican catechisms" for teachers to use (Hazlett 1973).

This last-minute effort had little impact; the new legislature was distinctly moderate, and Carnot's attempt to use State control of popular education for political goals contributed to a political reaction that elected Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte as president later the same year, and permitted him subsequently to establish the Second Empire with himself as Emperor Napoleon III. Fear of social revolution triumphed over the anticlericalism that had characterized the "friends of order" under the previous regime; thus one prominent statesman, Adolphe Thiers, proposed turning primary education entirely over to the Catholic clergy: "The primary school must above all serve [character-building] education, and give to children the eternal truths of religion and morality. Primary education must defend society against revolution. Society has been so deeply shaken [by the recent events] that it can recover its security only by seeing grow up around it new generations that will reassure it" (Ponteil 1966, 230).

Thiers characterized the primary teachers whose support Carnot had sought as "thirty-seven thousand socialists and communists, true anti-priests." His charge was echoed by influential Catholic layman Charles Montalembert, who described "two armies face to face, each of about thirty to forty thousand men: the army of teachers and the army of priests. The demoralizing and anarchical army of teachers must be countered by the army of priests" (Ponteil 1966, 235).

The antagonism between teacher and parish priest, foreshadowed rhetorically in the aftermath of the popular revolts of 1848, would become a reality later in the century. The conflict was prepared by two decades of collaboration between the Catholic Church and Emperor Napoleon III, who from 1852 to 1870 bolstered his power by means of a series of nationwide plebiscites in which the clergy helped to mobilize a series of overwhelming votes of support. In exchange, the Church was given a substantially free hand in education, and many local authorities chose to invite teaching congregations to provide schooling at public expense. The membership of religious orders increased from 37,000 in 1851 to 190,000 two decades later (see Raphael and Gontard 1975; Horvath-Peterson 1984).

One effect of this alliance of Church and State under Napoleon III was to confirm the Republican opposition in its determination—when it could return to power—to ban clerical influence from popular education. The fall of Napoleon III as a result of defeat by Germany in 1870 ushered in a decade of political uncertainty, at the end of which the Republicans (or Radicals) were securely in power.

One of the most influential of the Republican thinkers, Edgar Quinet, stressed that the issue in removing the influence of the Church from popular education was not to keep separate a secular and a spiritual sphere; for Quinet, Catholicism was identical with *political* reaction, and the Republic with *spiritual* progress. In 1789 two irreconcilable religions had come into confrontation, his ally Jules Michelet argued in a highly influential history, and the future depended upon the victory of the faith expressed in the Revolution. Alone among modern nations, Quinet wrote in 1846, France had tried to carry out a political and social revolution without having completed a religious revolution by destroying Catholicism entirely. "This liberal," one historian notes, "became a terrorist himself when it came to religion, and would have desired a half-century of iconoclastic terrorism" (Nicolet 1982, 94).

During the difficult decade of the 1870s, it was unclear whether French public policy would become more closely aligned with Catholicism or less. The issue was hotly debated. As one anticlerical newspaper put it in 1879, "it is essential to close all ecclesiastical schools without a single exception, for all of them are in the same way and to the same extent schools of counter-revolution" (M. Ozouf 1982, 65).

And a Catholic paper responded the next year to proposals for universal, free education in public schools:

> The Revolution is Evil, and even when it undertakes something that appears good, if you look carefully you will find evil at the bottom of it. . . . It is a ruinous principle for the authority of the family. If there is a single primal duty for a father and mother, it is to raise their children. . . . The formation of the spirit and the heart of the child, his "education"—this word of which only religion and the family possess the real meaning, which will always escape teachers appointed by the State—is the first duty of the family. (M. Ozouf 1982, 67)

Eventually the anticlerical Radicals were able to take advantage of the confusion of their opponents to establish the Third Republic. The foundation was by no means firm, however, and the Radicals made State-directed education the cornerstone of their efforts to create national unity and secure Republican institutions.

State leadership in education did not have to mean a militantly secular school. In Germany, by contrast, the government operated both Catholic and Protestant schools, and French Catholic leaders insisted that it was not mandatory attendance but the confessional nature of Prussian schools that had led to German victories (M. Ozouf

1982, 23). But the explicitly secular school was probably inevitable, given the long-standing opposition of the Radicals to the Church and the close alliance of the Church with the discredited regime of Napoleon III and with attempts to restore some form of monarchy.

The opportunity of the Radicals to realize their educational program did not come until 1877, when a commission chaired by the fiercely anticlerical Paul Bert proposed a legislative package of more than 100 articles. Over the next few years this program—lay-controlled teacher-training; universal, free, and obligatory schooling; and State inspection of schools operated by the Church—was enacted and implemented as a matter of highest priority for the Radical wing of the Republican majority.

The concern of the Radicals was far more with ensuring the secular and republican content of schooling than with using education to bring about social change. They did not touch, for example, the existing system of two classes of schools, one for the common people and the other for the elite; the Radicals hated religious "fanaticism" more than they hated social inequalities. Their educational program was a "pre-emptive strike" against clericalism and political reaction based in an unenlightened electorate.

In support of this objective, the education law of 1886 required a public elementary school in every commune, even if sufficient provision was already available in a Catholic school. Instruction in public schools henceforth could be given only by lay teachers, who were forbidden to exercise liturgical functions (such as being a cantor or reader) in any church, even on a voluntary basis. Nonpublic schools could not use antirepublican books that had been forbidden by the government, and they would be monitored regularly by public officials to ensure that nothing would be taught that was in conflict with the interests of the Republic.

A republican regime committed to personal liberties thus found itself, in the crucial sphere of education, denying the right of parents to schools that corresponded to their own beliefs. Jules Ferry, as minister of public instruction, condemned Catholic schools as

> establishments which are maintained as schools of counter-revolution, where one learns to detest and curse all of the ideas which are the honor and the purpose of modern France. . . . The youth who come out [of Catholic schools are] raised in ignorance and in hatred of the ideas that are dear to us. . . . Let this go on for ten years more, this blindness, and you will see all this lovely system of liberty of instruction . . . crowned by a last liberty: the liberty of civil war. (Legrand 1961, 47)

The schools of the Third Republic, then, placed a heavy stress upon moral and civic education, as a means of "endowing men with a moral tie superior to or at least equivalent to that which they once found in supernatural beliefs," as one of Ferry's allies wrote to him in 1879. What was needed was not neutrality, but a new form of spiritual authority capable (as Auguste Comte, who had a profound influence on Ferry and other school reformers, had written in 1824) "of replacing the clergy and organizing Europe through education." The common people could never be converted to the disinterested love of humanity through rational argument, but only through emotional appeals. Ferry and others sought, through the schools, to replace the love of God with the love of Humanity and of France. Only in this way, the Radicals believed, could the Revolution truly be completed.

During the closing decades of the 19th and into the 20th century a crusading laïcité or secularism sought—not without success—to promote an alternative to Catholicism. Having identified the Catholic Church as the primary enemy of the Republic, the Radicals paid it the compliment of seeking to emulate the Church by creating a State-controlled system of education that was centralized, unified in its doctrines, and concerned above all to transmit values and to shape loyalties. They relied in doing so above all upon the formation of teachers in normal schools that resembled nothing so much as seminaries of a secular religion (such leaders in this program as François Buisson, whose speeches were collected in a volume called *The Secular Faith*, Félix Pécaut and Jules Steeg were also leaders in liberal Protestantism). They turned also to the power of the State to drive Catholic teaching congregations out of France and to force parents to send their children to secularized public schools.

France, then, more explicitly than any other democratically ruled nation, implemented the "common school agenda" of seeking to shape the hearts of the rising generation through popular schooling. It did so through the exercise of State power, not only promoting government-controlled schools with the utmost vigor and moral passion, but also taking increasingly drastic steps to foreclose educational alternatives. The education provided in the State's own schools made no pretense of neutrality; indeed, those who shaped it would have considered a value-neutral school an abomination. Their goal was to inculcate a "secular faith."

The anticlerical effort eased somewhat around 1890 as leading Catholics called for loyalty to the Republic, but the Dreyfus Affair—in which the Church seemed to be allied with the forces of reaction—a decade later led to a major assault on the remaining Catholic role in education.

A Socialist journal complained, in 1898, that the government had not taken the most important step, that of abolishing freedom of education. Nothing could be more dangerous, insisted Premier Emile Combes in 1902, than to concede as an essential right the insinuation of ideas and doctrines into the minds of defenseless children. That year schools operated by teaching congregations were closed, and in 1904 Combes obtained legislation forbidding members of religious orders to teach in private as well as in public schools, and thousands of religious were expelled from the country. A leading educator pointed out that "the Republic recognizes every freedom, except that of voluntary servitude" (M. Ozouf 1982, 178–79; Chase 1983).

What developed in France in the course of the 19th century—though foreshadowed in the revolutionary program of the 1790s—was a militant opposition on the part of republicans to any role of the Catholic Church in education. This opposition went far beyond an insistence that the State should favor no particular religious position (as Napoleon III had favored Catholic schooling) but allow parents to choose schooling that reflected their preferences (neutralité). It went beyond the insistence that each school should be religiously uncommitted and allow different views to compete (laicité). The position that prevailed in republican circles in France asserted that materialism was not only the truth, but also essential to good citizenship; thus, any school teaching a different view of the world was a threat to the Republic and should be closed (laïcisme).

This position was expressed in an extreme fashion by Socialist leader René Viviani in 1904 when he boasted that

> neutrality is and always was a lie. It was perhaps necessary when forging, in the face of the impetuous rage of the Right, the education legislation. This chimera of neutrality was promised to reassure a few timid souls whose opposition would have made the law difficult to obtain. . . . We have never had another goal than to create an education system that was antireligious, and antireligious in an active, militant, and warlike fashion. (quoted in Lignières 1957, 39)

Making allowances for political rhetoric, Viviani's words are, nevertheless, a chilling statement of the goal of at least some of those who shaped French public education under the Third Republic. Many teachers—those local representatives of the Republic—clearly would have associated themselves with this explicitly antireligious program, and made a point of challenging religious beliefs and practices (J. Ozouf 1967).

The Persistence of Alternatives to the State's Schools

With all of these anticlerical efforts, and despite proposals to establish a government monopoly of schooling, the Third Republic was far from a totalitarian regime, and vestiges of educational freedom remained. The number of public schools operated by religious orders fell from 13,205 in 1876 to 452 in 1906, while the number of private schools operated by orders fell from 6,685 to 1,399, but the number of private schools under lay control grew during the same period from 5,841 to 11,548. Altogether, more than a million students were enrolled in private elementary schools in 1906, compared with 4.5 million in public schools; members of teaching orders continued to educate nearly a quarter of a million students in private and public elementary schools (from tables in M. Ozouf 1982, 233–34).

The high tide of hostility to the Catholic Church ebbed before the outbreak of World War I, and the authorities turned a blind eye as the teaching orders resumed providing an alternative to l'école laïque. Indeed, as teaching brothers and sisters were forced out of what had been Catholic-flavored public schools the private sector grew, just as it did in Belgium a few years earlier. In 1914 about 20 percent of all primary students attended private schools—without state subsidy—and roughly this proportion was maintained between the wars (Poutet 1983; Chevallier 1981).

The "school struggle" did not die away completely. In 1925 and 1936, for example, the bishops condemned secular public schools for carrying the "revolutionary virus" and undermining the moral and social order. In 1929 Pope Pius XI made it clear in his encyclical *Divini illius magistri* that Catholics could not accept the "pretended neutrality" of a school from which religion was excluded.

The secular forces, for their part, did not relax their opposition to confessional schooling. In 1927, the largest teachers' union in France demanded the nationalization of nonpublic schools, and in 1937 the director of a public teacher-training college wrote that "secular" no longer simply meant neutrally respectful toward all religions, but must take on the further meaning of "antireligious" (Leclerc 1985, 57). Such gestures may have exacerbated mutual mistrust, but they had no impact on the actual situation: public schools remained militantly secular and most private schools equally strongly Catholic—without public funding.

The need to raise privately the full cost of Catholic education led to declining enrollments in parish-based elementary schools between the wars, while Catholic secondary schools—before secondary education became universal—were able nearly to triple their enrollment of students whose parents could afford tuition (Teese 1986, 248).

The French defeat in 1940, bringing the Third Republic to an inglorious conclusion, threatened its proudest creation, the secular "republican school." General Weygand told the Vichy government that "all the disasters of the Fatherland come from the fact that the Republic chased God out of the schools. Our first duty must be to bring Him back." Chaplains were restored to secondary schools, government teacher-training institutes (the "seminaries of laicism") were abolished, and subsidies were provided to Catholic schools (Savary 1985, 105–6).

These arrangements instituted by the Vichy government were immediately cancelled by the Liberation in 1944, but the Fourth Republic was soon forced to deal with a massive campaign by the Catholic hierarchy and parents of Catholic school students. They complained of the injustice of a system that required them, in order to satisfy the demands of conscience, to provide an education parallel to that supported by their taxes. There was a certain moderation of the traditional positions in this period, however. The bishops conceded for the first time, in 1951, that, under certain circumstances, it was permissible for Catholic parents to send their children to a government school, even when a Catholic alternative was available. In the same spirit, the opposition to Catholic schooling among the general public declined. Support (as expressed in opinion polls) for government funding of part of the cost of private schooling increased from 28 percent in 1945 to 45 percent in 1951 (Piveteau 1967, 8, 26; Leclerc 1985, 60–61; Savary 1985, 121).

The Loi Barangé and Loi Marie of 1951 provided a financial subsidy on a per-pupil basis to confessional education, through a legal fiction that the aid was going directly to the parents. The basis for the present system of public funding was created by the Loi Debre, adopted at the start of the Fifth Republic in 1959, while the Loi Guermeur of 1977 extended it further. These were perceived as "so many defeats for the secular camp." A further blow to opponents of support for private schools was a ruling in 1977 that no constitutional barrier existed to a secular government funding confessional education (Leclerc 1985, 16–17).

The Loi Debré created a number of alternatives for nonpublic schools: (1) to continue completely independent of government intervention, subject to employing qualified teachers; (2) to be absorbed into the national public education system; (3) to accept government requirements as to curriculum and testing in exchange for staff salaries (contrat simple); and (4) to accept, in addition, some government control over pedagogy and the selection of teachers, in exchange for operating expenses as well as salaries (contrat d'association) (see Savary 1985, 35–38; Leclerc 1985).

On the advice of Church authorities, most Catholic elementary schools—whose funding needs were more limited—chose the contrat simple, while many secondary schools found the contrat d'association preferable to meet their higher operating costs (Teese 1986, 249).

To receive support under the contrat d'association a school must demonstrate that it meets an educational need. "The question remains open," Piveteau comments, "whether this official government recognition of an educational need lies in the hands of the government or of the population" (Piveteau 1967). In other words, is the fact that parents desire a particular form of education different from that provided by public schools sufficient basis for determining that a need exists for the alternative? How distinct must this specific identity (caractère propre) of the school be, and can it serve as the basis for refusing to employ teachers otherwise qualified?

While Catholic schools (representing 93 percent of private school enrollment) are almost without exception taking advantage of one of the forms of contract, most private nonconfessional schools have chosen to remain outside such arrangements, though they may receive a certain amount of public funding under the Loi Barangé (Ballion 1982, 262–63).

The Loi Guermeur strengthened the independence of private schools under contract by giving the principal the power to initiate the hiring of staff who would be paid with public funds, subject to government confirmation. Thus some schools may refuse to consider teachers whose convictions do not correspond to the school's identity. Private schools are in a sense placed in a more favorable position than public schools, which are subject to a highly centralized and bureaucratic process of assigning staff. The largest (and most politically potent) national federation of 49 teaching unions, the Fédération de l'Education Nationale (FEN), has been strongly opposed to this provision, since the federation has far more opportunity to exercise its influence in a centralized personnel system. The requirement that teachers agree with the purposes of a private school limits job opportunities for FEN's 400,000 members, three quarters of all French teachers. A substantial proportion of private school teachers have also supported their own integration into the public sector, in order to improve their job security and collectively bargained rights (Teese 1986, 255).

On the Catholic side, suspicion has persisted that government funding would lead to increasing government control, with private schools carried irresistibly by a sort of escalator effect into the public system. This suspicion was reinforced by a demand by secular forces in 1959: "If the private sector is destined to receive State aid, it is appropriate that it be subjected to the financial, administrative and pedagogical control" of the national Ministry of Education (Leclerc 1985, 72–73). This expectation is the background of the crisis in the early 1980s.

The Socialist Program: A Unified Educational System

The election of Socialist Francois Mitterand as president in 1981 threatened the political compromises embodied in 30 years of education legislation. In his campaign, Mitterand had called for "a great national public education service, unified and secular," including "all establishments and all staff." While he left the meaning he attached to these words deliberately obscure, and they had formed part of the Socialist and Communist party platforms for years, the close association of his Socialist party with anticlerical organizations suggested that he intended to make a move against the independence of—or the subsidies for—nonpublic schools.

Mitterand had good reasons to include in his program an assault upon the existing arrangements. Half of the delegates making up his Socialist majority in the National Assembly were teachers, and the FEN, an important element of his support (and owner of the building in Paris housing the Socialist Party), was strongly opposed to subsidies for private schools. The mid-level of local officials of this powerful union was especially determined to eliminate such subsidies (Savary 1985, 110). They were particularly angered that the proportion of total enrollment in private schools (including those under contrats d'association and contrats simples) had risen to 16 percent, from 12 percent in 1968. This opposition had been nursed through long years of Conservative dominance of national government—when it could be said that "the Right governs and the Left teaches"—and was based upon principled as well as material interests.

The victories for confessional schooling during the previous 30 years had been bitterly opposed. The secular teacher unions and other powerful groups formed, in 1953, the National Committee for Anticlerical Action (CNAL), an umbrella organization that has continued to be closely associated with the parties of the Left. The CNAL petition against the Loi Debré collected 10 million signatures. The goal of the CNAL has been "to bring together in a common school, in the name of science and of brotherhood, all the children of the one Fatherland, thus cementing French unity and preparing that of humanity." Thus, the CNAL program was not simply to prevent funding to private schools but, indeed, to effect their nationalization into a single State-controlled system (Leclerc 1985, 63).

Typical of attitudes in the anticlerical camp toward confessional schooling is a statement by Jean Cornec—long-time leader of a parent organization dedicated to secular education. Cornec told applauding rally in 1977 that "the Catholic hierarchy has never ceased to reduce mankind to a state of slavery, to oppress ideas, to limit freedom" (Leclerc 1985, 27). Thus, appeals to "educational freedom" on behalf of Catholic schooling were dismissed by Cornec as antithetical to the true freedom that could only be assured by government-operated schooling. The laws providing public funding to private schools should be repealed immediately (Savary 1985, 206).

The position of the CNAL was not simply a negative one, but included a call for a pedagogy free of all forms of dogmatism and designed to lead to a "humanistic education of the highest value." Secular morality, in the view of Cornec and other leaders, was antithetical to Christian morality with its stress on sin, resignation, and humility; anticlerical leader Michel Bouchareissas insisted that "secularism is the highest point of human consciousness." Only in the secular world view was real freedom possible, and the use of freedom as a battlecry by supporters of private education was therefore profoundly deceptive. The freedom at stake in this struggle was that of children, and it was up to the State to protect children's freedom, even against their own parents (Leclerc 1985, 122–23, 260). As Bouchareissas told a gathering of anticlerical youth,

> What an incredible imposture it is, what a crude distortion of the truth to pass off as defenders of freedom those who are fundamentally opposed to it. . . . Despite slander, hatred, lies and quasi-fascist efforts, the school war will be in vain and the French people will understand what an enormous dose of archaism and resentful spirit animates those who deliberately established and now seek to maintain educational separation, what latent racism, class-determined behavior and desire to institutionalise irregularities, injustices, privileges. (Leclerc 1985, 271)

The position of the FEN was that the specific identity (caractère propre) of Catholic schools, on the basis of which their funding was justified, was a matter not of pedagogical distinctiveness but of the evangelistic mission of the Church, and therefore should not be supported by a secular Republic. The decentralization of decision making, so much demanded in France in recent years, would be impossible without a unification of the educational system; decentralization could not coexist with pluralism.

Jacques Chirac (leader of the conservative party Rassemblement pour la Republique and twice premier) charged during the debates in May 1984 that what was at stake was an attempt by the FEN to extend its grip over private schools and to control, as with public schools, the appointment and promotion of teachers. This charge was not strictly unfair, but it was too limited. Public school teachers did, indeed, have a material interest in eliminating the special conditions under which private schools employed staff, but they also had an "ideal interest" in advancing the humanistic goals for education in which FEN and other anticlerical organizations believed so strongly.

Private schools, as they were integrated into the unified system demanded by the teachers' federation, would therefore have to abandon their claim to a caractère propre. The logic of recognizing such a specific identity as legitimate led, it was charged, to isolation and ghettos, and this was harmful to the unity of the nation; a genuine pluralism should exist *within* rather than *among* schools, based upon a new definition of secularism (Savary 1985, 192, 207; Leclerc 1985, 138–39, 266–67).

One who took up this challenge to define a more flexible form of secularism was an influential academic, Louis Legrand, in an argument for the "common school" (l'école unique) published in 1981. Legrand, who had earlier produced a significant study of the ideological background of the school reforms carried out by Jules Ferry, acknowledged that this issue was deeply divisive:

> the common school is opposed or supported, not on the basis of technical concerns . . . but of its goal. The common school is necessary, or detestable, to the extent that the awareness of cultural differences seems to require either the imposition of uniformity and the disappearance of these differences, or the institutional affirmation of diversity. . . . As a result our era is returning little by little to the quarrels or ideological wars which accompanied the establishment of the public school of the Republic. (Legrand 1981, 12–13)

The secular school was never, Legrand insisted, intended to be truly neutral. It was to be the instrument of a profound ideological transformation of the nation, to establish bourgeois republicanism—

finding spiritual expression in Auguste Comte's semireligious Positivism—at the expense of clerical and royalist influence among the people. This goal, deplorable as its class basis might have been from a Socialist perspective, at least produced coherent education. The Fifth Republic, unlike the Third, had no clear ideological foundation, and as a result its schooling had become "emptied of all content" (Legrand 1981, 56–57; see also Legrand 1961).

> It has become neutrality, accepting as the content of instruction only that which is based in no value, pure knowledge and technique. . . . But this neutrality is impossible, as the many incidents of recent years demonstrate, especially the growing and disquieting indifference of youth toward academic studies. . . . This pseudoneutrality is basically a school of social conformity—or of anarchical revolt against such conformity. The ideological vacuum leads in fact to the sterility of the institution. (Legrand 1981, 60–61)

For Legrand, the answer was not to abandon the goal of the common school, but to rediscover a sense of positive secularity, a set of values rooted in a humanistic perspective that could with confidence be taught to all students. After all, the ideological unity that served as the basis for the "republican school" of the Third Republic had been more an aspiration than a reality. It was imposed on a largely passive population by an elite that believed they were justified by the demands of the irreversible progress of humanity. Contemporary Marxist thinking continues to have this confidence, but the very success of the effort to drag and entice the mass of the population into modernity makes it less and less possible for an elite to continue to impose its values. Legrand concluded that French policymakers must "acknowledge the situation of ethical pluralism in which contemporary France finds itself."

A common school that simply brings together children whose families hold to highly conflicting views of the world can never do more, he argued, than carry out its strictly instrumental mission of teaching skills and information. That, finally, is satisfactory to no one, but he saw the possibility of creating a new basis for a common education:

> Neither faith in God nor faith in Progress remain as secure principles. A vague religiosity and a mistrust of scientific and technical progress have penetrated spirits with a nostalgic desire to go backwards. Does that not arise from a sense that something else is possible, that another concept of man is being born and could again give meaning to

> human life and to education? . . . One can ask whether . . . the concept of man in the world that emerges from anthropology would not make it possible to establish a new unifying ethic, acceptable to all. (Legrand 1981, 62, 77–78)

On the basis of such a humanistic—and, because based on anthropology, essentially relativistic—ethic, Legrand argued it would be possible to create a truly common school in which neither religion nor class would be allowed to serve as a pretext for separation. Such a school would have to return to its older mission: to teaching attitudes, not simply the intellectual skills to which present-day schools have retreated. It would place its emphasis on everything that favored human development, while pointing out what limited such development, in a truly "engaged" pedagogy. The shared search for the truth would take the unifying role that religion has played for 20 centuries, and "the tolerance thus developed would be the cement of a secular and democratic society" (Legrand 1981, 89, 91, 118).

This unification through schooling could only have its full effect, Legrand conceded, if society itself were unified through the elimination of differences in the condition of life through a strategy seeking social justice. Writing in 1981, he naturally hoped that Socialist government would achieve this broader objective as well. In anticipation, he described in some detail "a common program of education capable of responding to the ethical demands of a humanistic formation" (Legrand 1981, 150, 181).

While Legrand's book is an argument in support of the Socialist program of a unified system of education, he was forced to concede that private schools had an advantage in their clear identity:

> the body of society is divided, socially and ideologically. The official solution to this dilemma has been sought, as we have seen, in an aseptic concept of secularity. This is the worst and most hypocritical solution to the extent that it consists of emptying public education—having become more and more intellectual and arid—of values and thus of explicit ideology, while allowing the parallel development of a "free" educational system marked by an ideological ethic and context. . . . The common school [école unique] cannot be the present public school with its ethical and ideological emptiness. (Legrand 1981, 203)

Since there could be no question of the State again seeking to impose a single set of values on all schools, the only solution was to allow each school to educate on the basis of the values and the beliefs of those who entrusted it with their children. "The legitimacy of what is taught can no longer be validly sought in the State, but in the local community, free to determine the content, the methods, the moral orientation and the ideology of the teaching."

In every case, Legrand wrote, such schools must be part of a single, public education system, with the same method of funding and the same legal and professional position for staff. The local public school could be divided according to the wishes of parents and of local elected officials, as in other countries, but that would have the negative effect of social and ideological separation. Alternatively, part of the instruction could be common to all students, with another part separate on the basis of ideological orientation, or an agreement could be worked out under which different parts of the instruction would have different ideological flavoring. In any of these cases, Legrand argued, separate Catholic schools would no longer have a reason to exist, since all of their legitimate functions could be carried out within the common public school (Legrand 1981, 203–4).

Only some form of pedagogical autonomy, Legrand concluded, could bring to a positive conclusion the perennial debate over secular and religious schooling, a debate that he judged to be no longer relevant. In any case, "it is contradictory and inadmissable that a democracy that considers itself liberal should refuse to citizens who desire it the exercise of the fundamental right to decide on the nature of the education that their children will benefit from. The argument has been advanced ceaselessly by conservatives to justify a separate 'free' school. It is time to take it back and generalize it to the whole of society" (Legrand 1981, 205).

While Legrand argued for a measure of educational diversity—with respect to values though not to program—he did so in the context of calling for creation of the single national *system* of education that had long been a cornerstone of educational policy on the Left. Socialist Education Minister Alain Savary, appointed in 1981, sought to implement that policy without arousing too great a storm of opposition.

Savary acknowledged that public opinion supported a flexible pluralism in education and did not support an ideologically motivated attempt to mandate educational unity. He hoped, nevertheless, to take steps that would increase the "public" nature of subsidized schools by limiting their scope to define the distinctive character of their program, and to select staff based upon their adherence to this caractère propre. He spoke in terms of "the desire to unite, permanently and progressively, the too-much-divided elements of our national education system" (Savary 1985, 215).

Savary, like Legrand, recognized that it was not possible to revive the effort to impose a single set of values and loyalties through the school. He stressed that the single public system of education that he sought to create should have within it opportunity for "the free exercise and development of a pluralism of ideas, of beliefs, of ethnicities and of the indispensable right to be different" (Savary 1985, 19).

On the other hand, the initial proposals of the new government aroused tremendous resistance from those committed to Catholic education. These proposals included the appointment of principals and teachers by the government, the training of teachers exclusively in public institutions, and the strict application of attendance zones to private (as to public) schools. This would mean the end of the Christian character of private schools, Catholics charged (Leclerc 1985, 95).

The readiness of Savary to concede a right to pluralism within the public system was not matched by all of his allies. When he gave a speech before a great crowd of supporters of the anticlerical CNAL, he promised that the government would no longer support private schools that did not abide by the same rules as public schools. Then Savary asked rhetorically whether this meant that there would only be a single type of school; before he could answer, as he intended, "Certainly not!" the crowd roared "Yes!" "Will there still be private education in this country?" Savary went on, "I say yes!" The crowd howled him down (Leclerc 1985, 157).

The back-and-forth of proposals during the several years of effort on the part of the Socialist government to find a school policy it could enact and implement need not be traced here (see accounts, from contrasting perspectives, in Savary and Leclerc). The bill that emerged—only finally to be withdrawn when opposition forced Savary's resignation—required that each private school seeking public funding develop a written educational program specifying how it would be organized and would express its identity, which could for example be confessional, international, experimental or linguistic. Parents would have complete freedom of choice among such educational programs. The government would satisfy itself that each school met its basic constitutional obligation to provide equal access and to respect liberty of conscience, that instruction was "provided following the rules and programs of public education," and that it was free. Teachers in private schools could choose whether to become part of the state service. The implication was that many would do so, and thus, gradually, staffing would come under public control (Savary 1985, 217–19).

This proposal—reasonable on its face—satisfied no one. For the anticlerical forces it did not go far enough to "integrate" private schools into the public system, and indeed threatened to "contaminate" public education with the practices and ideas of private. For supporters of private education, on the other hand, it placed too many restrictions on program and, of course, on staffing, and was seen as leading inevitably to the loss of their schools' distinctiveness.

The Defense of Catholic Education

National unity has been a theme of particular resonance in the development of popular education in France at all times. An alternative Catholic perspective on how such unity could best be realized was spelled out in an important book by Jacques Bur in 1959. Respect for freedom of conscience, Bur wrote, demanded that believers be allowed to choose how their children would be educated; the common school could not, by its very nature, satisfy all citizens in a religiously diverse society.

> The unity of citizens is not achieved by imposing on all a silence about the beliefs of some in order not to offend the unbelief of others. . . . It is not by leveling spiritual diversity that national unity is to be sought, but by bringing it into greater relief in a higher harmony that binds together the various individuals and groups in a common desire to enrich the national ideal. . . . An educational system that is corporative and pluralistic, far from dividing youth, will permit a harmonious unity that will not in the slightest resemble administrative uniformity or totalitarian mechanization, but is made up of a fertile and organic association among diversities. (Bur 1959, 212, 254–55, 263)

Bur wrote at a moment when the Catholic position on confessional schooling still stood firm, but it would be profoundly shaken over the next decade. It was in 1959, indeed, that an increasing number of priests began to abandon their vows, several years before the same phenomenon affected the Church in other countries. Those priests remaining were, to an increasing extent, more pro-Socialist than the laity (for an account of the process in one working-class parish, see Delestre 1977). Many of the most influential at the diocesan and national level had ministered as chaplains to various Catholic movements on the Left rather than as parish priests. They were more interested in collaboration in the interest of social progress than in the maintenance of confessional institutions like schools. When parents asked for the support of Church leadership in the struggle to maintain the independence (and government funding) of Catholic schools, the response, in the 1970s, tended to be less than eager; the

Church had other pressing concerns to address, and ones that did not threaten to reopen old wounds (Leclerc 1985, 91).

The position of Catholic education had also been weakened by the rapid decline in membership of the teaching orders and consequent need to rely upon lay teachers, as well as by the difficulty of building schools in the new communities that developed in France with the demographic explosion of the postwar period. While staff salaries and (in the case of schools with a contrat d'association) operating expenses were paid by government, the cost of building private schools continued to rest upon the sponsors and thus, ultimately at least, on parents.

The Socialists were emboldened to risk reopening the educational battles of the Third Republic, in the interest of a unifying common school, by the wavering support of the Catholic hierarchy and intelligentsia for Catholic schools. Whereas in 1959 the bishops had taken a leading role in obtaining the Loi Debré, they grew more reticent in the 1960s and 1970s. In a statement issued at Lourdes, in 1969, they went so far as to note that many good Catholics "render testimony to Christ" by working in public education, and that the choice, for parents, between Catholic and secular schools was "legitimate and respectable." Some supporters charged that Catholic education was the "unloved child" of the postconciliar Church (Leclerc 1985, 112).

French public opinion, on the other hand, was favorable to the continued independence of private schools, and less than one voter in four wanted to see State financial aid discontinued. The organization of parents of students in nonpublic schools, the National Union of Parent Associations for Free Education (UNAPEL), had nearly a million members, easily mobilized in defense of continued subsidies and against any intrusions upon the prized independence of their schools. Its anticlerical counterpart, the CNAL, made its own efforts to mobilize supporters, but was not able to bring out more than some 300,000—itself no mean number for an essentially negative position.

A survey in 1983 found that 51 percent of those questioned were prepared to sign a petition in support of private education compared with 28 percent who would sign one in support of a single unified system. Curiously, 30 percent of the Communists and 35 percent of the Socialists indicated support for private education. Two years earlier 81 percent of the French people surveyed supported free choice of schools, with 30 percent in favor of making the government funding even more generous to make private education completely cost-free (Leclerc 1985, 196, 103).

The supporters of Catholic education were alarmed by Savary's proposals. Once their schools were absorbed into a vast system of state education, how could they preserve their identity and thus their purpose? They were not opposed to national unity but, as Fr. Guiberteau pointed out, "this unity is fashioned from diversity and not from the totalitarianism of a public system in which we would not be able to express ourselves." After all, he said, a Catholic school is not simply like any other, with a chaplain added; it involves a "global choice, a will to transmit everything that is specific to Christianity through a climate of Gospel values" (Leclerc 1985, 107).

Catholic critics believed that selection of school directors and staff by the public education authorities and the training of all teachers in public institutions would surely destroy the Christian character of Catholic schools. Principals of public schools could not select their teaching staff, and it was difficult to see how the distinctive identity of a private school could be maintained without that right (Leclerc 1985, 94–95, 21).

In what has been described as a decisive turning point for the French Catholic Church, the bishops reaffirmed in 1981 their full support for Catholic schooling. The fact that there are schools which place at the very heart of the educational process the values inspired by the Gospel, they insisted, was an important contribution to youth who are searching for meaning for their lives. This reassertion of the traditional Catholic position on education—perhaps in response to the Pope's challenge in 1980, "France, eldest daughter of the Church, are you still faithful to your baptismal promises?"—was widely taken as a sign that the progressive elements that had come to dominate the Church in the 1960s were losing influence.

New leadership was indeed emerging in the French Catholic Church, as signaled by the appointment of Jean-Marie Lustiger, a convert from Judaism, as archbishop of Paris. Whereas the leaders of the 1960s believed that the Gospel message would emerge more clearly if the Church effaced its institutional aspects and emptied itself so far as possible of any claim to power, the new style was to stress that sacraments require outward and visible signs as well as inward and spiritual graces. The Church once again sought to make itself a presence on the national scene, inspired by the example of the Polish Church as well as by the pressure of a laity who looked to the bishops to share their concern for Catholic education.

For the next 3 years one of the most bitter political conflicts in postwar France took place over the issue of Catholic schooling. In response to the claim of the anticlericals, that government-sponsored education protected the freedom of children, Cardinal Lustiger insisted that

> the child does not belong to anyone and certainly not to the State. He is given by God to parents who are not his owners but are responsible for him as a gift entrusted to them. In order for this child to become what he [truly] is—free, in the image of a free God—it is necessary that his parents, those primarily responsible, initiate him into freedom! Thus the necessity of the educating family. All psychologists know that the child develops an awareness of himself in relation to his parents. All totalitarian regimes, from Nazism to all forms of Bolshevism, know that they must remove the child as early as possible from his family if they wish to create "the new man." (Leclerc 1985, 274)

Even Pope John Paul II intervened in the French situation (and the crisis developing in Spain under parallel circumstances), with a statement stressing the distinctive content and identity of the Catholic school, and relating the right to operate such schools to freedom of conscience (Leclerc 1985, 305).

The specific identity (caractère propre) of Catholic schools was clearly at the heart of the issue. The National Committee for Catholic Education (CNEC) insisted that this identity must mark all aspects of the life of the school, including the development of skills and knowledge. This required free choice for families, real autonomy for each school, collaboration by the staff of the school in a common educational enterprise (thus implying that they could not be transferred around individually, like public school teachers), choice of the principal and staff, and special training for teachers. For the National Union of Parent Associations for Free Education, the specific identity of each school represented a sort of moral contract between the staff and the parents who had chosen that school (Savary 1985, 190–91).

Parent involvement was the key to the eventual defeat of the government's proposals. Private education was well situated in this respect since each French private school is dependent upon its parents to provide funding for physical facilities, unlike, for example, the situation in the Netherlands or Belgium. The 1983 survey cited above found that 62 percent of the private school parents were prepared to demonstrate in support of educational freedom, while only 11 percent of the public school parents felt equally strongly about a unified secular system (Leclerc 1985, 196).

Gigantic demonstrations—the last of them bringing more than a million supporters of private schools to the streets of Paris in June 1984 (including 570,000 clocked through the railway stations and others who arrived on nearly 6,000 chartered buses)—showed how strongly parents felt about retaining an alternative to the state system of schooling. Although Catholic school supporters formed the backbone of the demonstrations, Jewish schools were strongly represented as well, together with a 100,000 students and parents from nonconfessional private schools.

The CNAL organized its own massive, though rather smaller, demonstrations to show the continuing strength of anticlerical sentiment, but nothing could match the outpouring of support for parent choice.

The upshot, in July 1984, was the resignation of Savary and the abandonment of any efforts by the Socialists to change the groundrules for education. For the anticlericals, this was a convincing defeat: "The integration [of private schools into the public system] of which they had always dreamed, even a government of the Left with an absolute majority in the legislature could not implement" (Leclerc 1985, 313).

The subsequent defeat of the Socialists in the 1986 elections was attributed, by many observers, to this debacle. One conservative observer suggested that the orderly river of parents on the pavements of Paris in June 1984 had not sought to overthrow the government but had done something much more damaging: they had simply ignored it (Dutourd 1985, 164).

The Conservative Counterattack on Public Schools

In addition to the struggle over the status of nonpublic schooling, the French "common school" has experienced recent attacks from neoconservative critics (in French political terms, Liberals) who questioned whether education was well served by a centralized and highly regulated system under a near-monopoly by the government and the national unions. Thus Jacques Chirac warned, in a radio speech, that "those who are determined to defend liberty" would not accept the attempted "seizure, by Socialists and Communists in power, of the minds of our children."

A sweeping indictment of education under Socialist control was published by Didier Maupas on behalf of the conservative study group Le Club de l'Horloge. Maupas argued in *L'école en accusation* (1984) that an egalitarian ideology had had the effect of emptying education of most of its content and all sense of the need for effort and discipline. "It is normal," he insisted, "for parents to move toward private education if government refuses to set in motion a strategy for successful schools" (Maupas 1984, 17).

Maupas described a "black market" in public education, with parents finding many ways of evading the rigidities of the school attendance zones. Those with sophistication and connections could always find ways to get their children into the desired school, going so far as to rent a house for just long enough to register at the local school. "'It's crazy how many people live across the street from the Lycee Henri-IV [an elite secondary school in Paris],' they say ironically." A more complicated method was to ask for a course (for example, Russian or Greek) offered only at certain prestigious schools (Maupas 1984, 19).

Why did middle-class parents increasingly sign their children up for all sorts of cultural or athletic activities after school? Maupas speculated that it was because they wanted to give their children an experience of the discipline necessary to excellence, the moral armament that the public school no longer provides. Education must above all, Maupas wrote, develop the will and nurture character, and this requires effort and difficulties to be overcome. Lowering standards and expectations in the name of egalitarian goals was in fact fair to no one (Maupas 1984, 20, 144–45).

The only answer, according to Maupas, was to destroy the present bureaucratic control of education and encourage diversity, choice, and a renewal of high expectations; this would require "breaking with the illusion of the common school" and instead "adapting education to human diversity." Rather than seek to give parents some say in school decisionmaking through the Socialist program of parent-teacher councils, the school staff should be made fully responsible for the pedagogical techniques that they use, and parents then given a choice among schools. Belgium, he claimed, was an example of the successful operation of such parent choice. Government should certify schools on the basis of their programs and the qualifications and morality of their staff, and then provide funding for the number of students enrolled. Only in this way could the process of education be adapted to human diversity (Maupas 1984, 191–97).

Sociologist Robert Ballion agreed, on the basis of research reported in *Les consommateurs d'école* ("The Education Consumers") (1982), that parent-teacher councils had proved ineffective. Successful parent intervention in the interest of the education of their children occurs instead through a form of consumer behavior.

Ballion found that the present French system, without a formalized and generally understood mechanism for the exercise of parent choice, does indeed largely benefit sophisticated, middle-class parents. Research had showed that working-class parents, contrary to expectation, did not choose only the traditional forms of schooling; they distinguished themselves from middle-class parents not by the nature of the choices made but by a reduced likelihood that they would exercise a choice at all (Ballion 1982, 101–3).

Other research had shown that middle-class parents were more likely to seek a change in school or program as soon as a child began to experience difficulties. Middle-class children did not experience notably fewer early learning difficulties, but they were more likely to receive appropriate help because of the consumer sophistication of their parents. Ballion concluded that there was a "social inequality in the face of failure" resulting from the inability of working-class parents to make effective use of educational choice (Ballion 1982, 104–8).

In a study of parents who made use of an education reference service in Paris, Ballion found that those belonging to the lower middle class tended to see no other alternative than a private school for their children who were experiencing difficulty. Those of a higher status were more aware of the possibility of manipulating the public system to the benefit of their children.

Private education, Ballion argued, is by no means an elite alternative, though the proportion of students from working-class homes in 1976–77 was 38.2 percent in public but "only" 21.3 percent in private education as a whole. Children of professionals and higher level officials represented 9 percent of the students in public and 14.6 percent of those in private education. Stated another way, in 1981, 50 percent of the children of businessmen and industrialists, 33 percent of those of professionals and higher-level officials, but only 14 percent of those of workers and 18 percent of those of white-collar employees were in private schools (Savary 1985, 128).

The most prestigious secondary schools of all, however, are the upper rank of public lycées, like Louis-le-Grand, Ravel, and Jules Ferry in Paris. On the other hand, a whole sector of non-Catholic private schools specialize in giving a second chance to students who have experienced academic failure in public schools. Another sector appeals to parents who are seeking a very "contemporary" education for their children (Ballion 1982, 117–18, 277–84).

Ballion's review of the research led him to the conclusion that "the state school seeks to express a universalism that no longer exists. The present crisis of the school is a crisis of society, for it is a crisis of consensus" (Ballion 1982, 194). The traditional concept of the goals and methods of education no longer enjoys hegemony, but the more child-centered concepts, though tending to impose themselves as collective values, are in fact held by a minority of parents (207). "For many years education has been seen, not as a service made available to citizens, but as an institution charged with exercising a—beneficent—constraint on that citizen" (211).

This lack of choice creates serious problems in a free society, Ballion argued. While we can consult another doctor or garage mechanic if we lose confidence in the services we are receiving, we are not supposed to seek out another educational setting for our children. "[Public] education is the only service for which the user is denied the right of evaluation" (Ballion 1982, 288). The contemporary expectations of "a mercantile society where freedom of choice based upon critical judgment reigns" would be better served if schools were allowed to respond in a differentiated manner to particular groups of parents, who would thereby be encouraged to act to obtain the most appropriate services for their children. After all, the families questioned by parent associations had expressed strong support for "the free choice of schools by parents," with 92 percent making this demand (Ballion 1982, 180).

> In contrast with public education, which defines itself by reference to the idea of a public service, that is of a uniform supply corresponding to a collective need, private education justifies its existence by the existence of individualized demands that a collective supply cannot satisfy. . . . Private schools, unlike public schools, don't have "captive users," but "clients," who choose in total freedom. They are in consequence placed in a competitive relationship that incites them to retain a share of the market by offering a specific service, and thus draws them into a process of differentiation. (Ballion 1982, 222–23)

Quite apart from ideological considerations, Ballion urged, "private education, in its present forms, is moving in the direction of an improved functioning of our educational system . . . by legitimizing a new attitude toward education, that of the pre-eminence of the consumer, private education places public education more and more on the defensive, entering into competition with it and thus creating a new situation of which no one can predict the consequences" (Ballion 1982, 284–5).

One willing to try to make such a prediction was Alain Madelin, a rising star among conservatives in the legislature. In *Pour libérer l'école: L'enseignement à la carte* (1984) Madelin reiterated many of the themes covered at more length by Ballion and Maupas, insisting that "effectiveness, freedom, justice, democracy" could all be enhanced by a system of diversity and choice in education.

> We are the heirs of a system in which everything is decided from the top down. We must turn the educational pyramid over and build a system in which the base, that is, the demand for education, is decisive. . . . Now it is supply

> that is in control. The "consumers of schooling" . . . have to follow and seek to adapt themselves to the education that is offered to them. [They are] captive and passive users. . . . The school where your child happens to be assigned may be excellent or detestable. You have nothing to say about it. The only escape hatch remains private education. That's why it upsets the Socialists so much. (Madelin 1984, 25–26)

Real reform of education was blocked by a secularism that had moved further and further from a real respect for liberty of conscience, and by a teacher's union (the FEN) that, like large corporations, was pressing relentlessly for uniformity and monopoly (Madelin 1984, 86, 106).

Not only is this limitation on diversity and choice unfair, Madelin argued, but it prevents finding a solution to the growing problems of ineffective schools and student alienation.

> All analyses agree: the struggle against academic failure requires using differentiated pedagogies. The school must adapt itself to this very strong and very diversified demand. What's the use of dreaming of a more talented Ministry [of Education] or of a miracle reform? That's not where the problem lies. To respond to a strong, individualized, diverse demand for education, it is essential to abandon the controlling logic of supply. Another logic is necessary: that of consumers. The education of the future is an education controlled from below, by demand. But demand requires choice, and choice [requires] liberty and competition among schools. (Madelin 1984, 35)

Madelin urged that the State stop financing schools and finance education instead, by some form of voucher that would permit parents and students maximum freedom and influence through their choices. His suggestion for bringing about this "revolution of responsibility" was that each child be allocated 10,000 "points" at birth, to be used at any time in his or her career "according to the opportunities, desires, or needs" at that moment. "Educational points represent the possibility of a supple and ever-adaptable system that can break the logic of the present dirigism" (Madelin 1984, 57–58).

The issue was not one of efficiency alone, Madelin argued, but of principles, of fundamental choices about society. The arguments for a State monopoly of education (or of free education, since "What is liberty if it becomes the privilege of the few?") were based, for some, on a desire to preserve the social order, while for others it was a means to build a new order. Thus Madelin quoted Jean-Pierre

Chevenement (the Socialist successor of Savary as Minister of National Education) as saying that it was the goal of the Socialists to change what is inside heads. After all, so the Socialist argument went, future citizens must be educated to place the interests of society above their individual concerns and loyalties, and this was of fundamental importance to a government determined to create a more just social order. The logic of this argument was that "freedom will be fully assured when the State has a monopoly of education." From the perspective of the French Liberals, on the other hand, educational freedom was not something granted by the State but a fundamental right, prior to the State and untouchable (Madelin 1984, 65–69, 91, 77).

In the interest of effective education, then, and as a matter of basic right as well, Madelin called for public policy to encourage parent choice among autonomous schools. He pointed out the contradiction between the Left's demand for worker management at the shop level and its indignant rejection of the idea that school staff could make fundamental decisions. At the FEN Congress in 1982, for example, the leaders of the largest teacher association attacked alternative schools as "comforting those who support private education in their demand for a right to be different" (Madelin 1984, 138–39).

Madelin recognized the powerful—and generous—appeal of the ideal of public education as the great reconciler of social classes and the forger of a single national identity (Glenn 1988, chapters 1 and 9). The fact was, however, that the system of school attendance zones restricted most students to attending school with others of their own social class. The exception were those middle-class parents who know how to take advantage of the loopholes, use "pull" (piston), or make deals to get their children into the better schools. Perhaps a universal system of parent choice could give everyone the chance to take advantage of good educational opportunities. Madelin rejected the idea that the State could, through its schools, impose a single national morality, framed on a secular, "neutral" basis, as inconsistent with a pluralistic and liberal democracy. "We must accept, at one and the same time, the pluralism of moralities and that of schools," he urged, despite the vertigo that the infinite possibilities of liberty may inspire (Madelin 1984, 145–55).

In an open society, Madelin concluded, "consensus must be reached not on goals but on respect for the rules of fair behavior that will apply to all." In education, the only system consistent with freedom, justice and democracy, as well as with effectiveness, was that of parent choice. "A new idea, a crossroads, this can unite the French people, give a contemporary expression to their determination not to submit, either for themselves or for their children, to decisions in which they have had no part; it can solidify the popular attachment to freedom of choice. In the school, as in so many other areas, freedom must be expanded" (Madelin 1984, 176).

With the conservative victory in the March 1986 elections, some observers speculated that Madelin and others might press for the "privatization" of public schooling as of other aspects of the French Welfare State. It may be that the entrenched power of the education bureaucracy was such that this seemed an unpromising task; Madelin accepted the portfolio of minister of industry, and the Chirac government did little to challenge the present system. Experiments that had begun under the Socialists to permit an expanded choice among three or four public schools in certain areas were continued and supported. A year-end report by the French newsmagazine *L'Express* in December 1987 noted that "the world of education, traditionally fertile in upsets, confrontations and projects, has experienced, the past twelve months, one of the calmest periods in its history."

In preparing for the 1988 presidential and then parliamentary elections, the Socialist leadership took care not to renew hostilities by raising any questions about funding for private schools. The leaders were apparently not pleased when the opening speech of the FEN's annual conference, in February 1988, attempted to reopen the debate. The powerful Communist faction within the FEN accused the Socialists of having accepted defeat on this issue too easily, but Mitterand's convincing victory seemed to confirm the wisdom of having backed down on confrontation with private school parents.

At present, then, a stand-off exists in French education on the issue of diversity and choice. The Socialists were not able to dismantle the compromises under which Catholic and other private schooling enjoy public subsidies or to bring all schools into a single educational system. The conservative parties, on the other hand, have made no moves against a public education system heavily dominated by their opponents.

Assessing Parent Choice in France

How much real choice exists in French education? Twenty years ago Didier Piveteau lamented that "because of the close relationship created in 1958 between Catholic and government schools, it may be said that, apart from religion, the curriculum of the Catholic school has no distinctive features." On the other hand, he suggested, a difference did exist between the more subject-oriented teachers in public schools and the more student-oriented teachers in Catholic schools (Piveteau 1967, 30, 36). The basis of even this difference has been eroding, however. The proportion of the staff of Catholic schools who were priests or members of religious teaching orders dropped, in the next 20 years, from 40 to 10 percent, and there are indications that many lay teachers differ little, in their values, from those employed in public schools (Teese 1986, 251).

By 1981, Socialist Minister of Education Alain Savary pointed out, 14 percent of the Catholic schools provided no religious instruction at all and 24 percent of them regarded school climate alone as the essence of their religious instruction. For only 25 percent of the parents choosing Catholic schools was the confessional character of the school the decisive factor. In other words, from Savary's perspective, parents may have a right of conscience to choose a Catholic school but, in most cases, choice is motivated by other considerations than religious belief. He quoted education historian Antoine Prost's conclusion that "Catholic education is, in reality, a tailor-made education for an elite public. The facade is religious and the reality social" (Savary 1985, 77).

This judgment seems too schematic. After all, parents may be uncomfortable with the traditional denominational battle lines and yet look for something in Catholic education that they believe to be missing in secular schools. A study commissioned by Savary himself, in 1982, found that 92 percent of private school parents were motivated by a concern that their children receive not just instruction but also an education in the sense of the development of the whole person. For 84 percent it was important that their children receive an education respecting traditional values. The fact that "only" 64 percent wanted specifically religious instruction should not be taken to prove that the others had no reasons other than social elitism to select a Catholic school. Part of the role of the national associations of Catholic education, Teese has suggested, was to redefine its distinctiveness: "Through the elaboration of certain key concepts, such as the "educational project" or the "educative team," and the stress on certain recurring elements, such as "choice" and "care," schools that were once confessional acquire distinctiveness in secular terms" (Teese 1986, 254).

With 2 million students and some 150,000 staff, Catholic education in France is not likely to disappear, especially in view of the tremendous show of support in 1984. The question remains, whether demand for parent choice and for alternatives to the common public school is more prevalent than demand for explicitly Catholic education as such. To a substantial extent, as Maupas and others point out and even Socialist education minister Savary conceded, sophisticated parents exercise choice within a public system that, in the name of unity and equality, has refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of parental choice. Faced with this reality, the teacher unions have admitted that more flexibility is needed, and the government has set in motion a certain number of experiments with the system of attendance zones (Savary 1985, 32, 55).

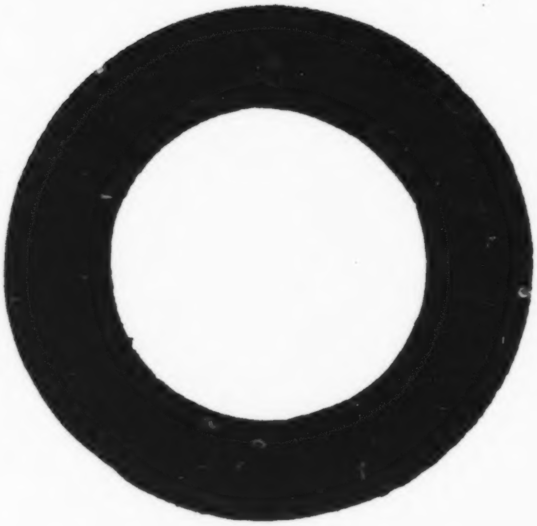
Savary proposed, in October 1983, that

> Education should be national without being uniform, respecting equal access for all to all establishments that make up the public system. The diversity of pedagogical needs of students, the educational choices of parents, the functioning of the act of teaching, require that educational establishments be more autonomous and more responsible, that they offer programs adapted to their student population. This diversity of establishments, however, must be put at the service of a global educational mission, committed to transmitting the knowledge and the values that the national community recognizes as essential for education, as it must offer to those who desire it [that knowledge and those values] that depend upon personal choices. (Leclerc 1985, 193)

The question arises, why the concept of distinctive identity (caractère propre) could not be applied to public as it is to private schools. To do so would be truly revolutionary, as Leclerc observes, because it would take decentralization to its logical conclusion "in turning the back once and for all on the old monolithism" of the public education system (Leclerc 1985, 161). It would be the ultimate renunciation of the Jacobin dream of molding citizens in a single pattern and to the same set of loyalties and attitudes.

Despite the support of such prominent young conservatives as Alain Madelin for this bold step, the power of the education establishment makes it unlikely that any government soon will seek to implement a "disestablishment" of the present unitary system. The 3 years of the conservative Chirac government reflected a sort of armed truce on education policy, with conservatives keeping their hands off the public school in exchange for the continued funding of private schools without undue bureaucratic interference. There are no signs that this will change under the present Socialist-dominated government of Michel Rocard.

The struggle in France over the opportunity to make choices about schools suggests the accuracy of Cardinal Lustiger's conclusion: "No, diversity does not produce division. It is the denial [of diversity] that produces division."



Netherlands

arental Choice in utch Education

he Structure of Choice

Dutch education is generally considered the most highly evolved system in the world of parent choice among schools. It serves as a reference point for both positive and negative guments about parent choice in the United States, often with little ctual basis. Judgments on this system by Americans tend to be favorable unless made by supporters of parochial schools. Thus e observer commented that "through it the Dutch have built three oples out of one—quite a contrast to what we have been trying to , perhaps somewhat less successfully, in building one people out of any." (Reller 1963, 188)

And the president of the American Federation of Teachers, Albert anker, warned in his weekly advertisement in the New York Times, July 4, 1982, "If our public schools were to meet the same fate as olland's, there would be major national consequences."

Sister M. Raymond McLaughlin, by contrast, described Dutch lucation as "the ideal solution."

> If religious neutrality is what some people in Holland want, they can have it. But there are many others whose view of life demands an education which integrates the secular elements with religious and moral training; they, too, can have this without the penalty of an additional financial burden. The arrangement patently is just; it gives practical recognition to the primacy of parental rights in education; it gives full consideration to the most precious of liberties—freedom of religion in education; it allows all to share equitably in public educational funds. (McLaughlin 1967, 411)

The discussion that follows concentrates on elementary schooling, nce Dutch secondary education is highly and confusingly differenated by degree of academic emphasis. Our focus will be primarily on the choices available in the Netherlands on the basis of convictions about how beliefs and values should be reflected in schooling. These choices emerge most clearly at the elementary level, though full public funding for private education extends through secondary and higher education in the Netherlands.

Educational freedom is written into the Dutch Constitution. Article 23 (formerly article 208), adopted in 1917, guarantees the freedom to provide education and, explicitly, to appoint teachers and select curriculum, with government oversight only with respect to quality and the moral character of the teachers (Akkermans 1980, 9). This article has been interpreted in legislation to guarantee full public funding for any school parents may choose, provided that it meets enrollment and quality requirements.

Dutch education law requires a "responsible authority" (bevoegd gezag) for each school. This may be (for some secondary and higher education institutions) the national government, or (for elementary education) the local government, in which cases the school is considered public (openbaar). If the responsible authority is an association or foundation, institution, church council, or religious community, the school is considered private (bijzonder).

A large proportion of students—approximately 70 percent at the elementary level (Kemenade 1981, 77)—attend schools operated by nongovernment organizations. In 1980, there were 546,918 (31.4 percent) students in public kindergarten and elementary schools, 492,541 (28.3 percent) in Protestant, 644,684 (37 percent) in Catholic, and 58,775 (3.4 percent) in "neutral" (nonconfessional) private schools. The proportion in Catholic schools has been declining relative to the other three types of schools. In the various types of vocational education, the proportion of students in neutral private schools is much higher, since many were organized by industry associations. In 1980, only 11 percent of some 700,000 vocational students were in public schools, 20 percent in Protestant, 30 percent in Catholic, and 38 percent in neutral private schools (Dodde 1983, 120–22).

More than two-thirds of Catholic elementary schools are operated by foundations set up by the church and managed by Catholic lay people, while 90 percent of Protestant schools are operated by associations of individuals. This contrast reflects the historical development of Protestant schooling from the efforts of parents, not necessarily supported by their churches. Nonconfessional private schools vary in their organizational sponsorship, with no single type preponderant.

Freedom of education, under Dutch law, is seen as consisting of distinct freedoms to establish a school (stichting), to mark it with a particular world view (richting), and to shape the content of instruction (inrichting). Private schools may be as distinctively confessional or ideological as desired. Since 1919 a national Education Council has had as its primary function to issue advisory opinions in cases in which one of the three educational freedoms seems to be threatened by some administrative measure (Leune 1981, 359).

Under the elementary education law, most recently revised in 1983, schools may receive public subsidy of all operating costs even at enrollment levels that, in most nations, would ensure their closing or consolidation. The "average" elementary school has 159 students, with a capacity of 199 and thus a 20 percent excess capacity (James 1982, 24). This excess capacity, although under pressure in the present climate of fiscal austerity, is considered a protection of the right of access to a school with the desired richting.

In theory, at least, starting and obtaining funding for a new elementary school is simple. Each community (or several together) must develop a plan each year specifying which public and private schools will be funded for the following 3 years. A private school must be included in the funding plan if its responsible authority can show that it will be attended by a sufficient number of students. This number varies according to the size of the community, from 200 students for a community with more than 100,000 inhabitants, to 80 students for a community with fewer than 25,000 inhabitants. If no other school is available that provides an education of the same richting (denominational or pedagogical character), these numbers are lower: from 150 down to 60 for the smaller communities, with the national government reserving the right to set the number still lower in special circumstances.

Once approved, a private school must be maintained in the municipal funding plan if it continues to meet minimum enrollment standards. In a community with less than 25,000 inhabitants, a school is threatened with closing if for 3 years it enrolls fewer than 50 students, but this critical number drops to 30 students if there is no school of the same type within 3 kilometers. In the largest communities, those with more than 100,000 inhabitants, a school will be closed only if its enrollment drops for 3 years below 80 students, provided that there is no school of the same type within 3 kilometers (Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen 1984: articles 54–56, 107 of the Elementary Education Law effective August 1985). Municipalities are also encouraged to provide transportation subsidies for parents enrolling their children in a distant school, especially if that choice rests upon religious or "world view" considerations (article 45).

The national government determines annually the need for secondary schools of each richting and each of the (very complex) varieties of secondary academic and vocational training. This process occurs through negotiations among the coordinating groups that represent the four varieties of schooling: the Association of Municipalities for public education, the Catholic School Council, the Protestant-Christian School Council, and the General [nondenominational] Private School Council (Leune 1981).

In a period of declining enrollments and school closings, determining in practice the meaning of the "same richting" assumes considerable importance. The availability of a nearby Catholic school, for example, would permit the closing of another that is underenrolled. No issues seem to have arisen over whether a Catholic school whose religious instruction is based upon liberation theology—and reportedly there are many in the Netherlands—is equivalent for parents to another that stresses the traditional catechism, or vice versa. Political commitments have not been given the same standing as religious commitments in establishing a right to school choice.

This question of equivalence has arisen repeatedly with respect to the theological flavoring of Protestant schools, however, since some 5 percent of them are religiously conservative "Reformational" schools founded in conscious opposition to the perceived laxness of the Protestant-Christian schools. As early as 1933, the government decided that these groups of schools were in fact not equivalent and that the former had all the rights of a distinct richting, but the issue continues to arise as local government seeks to consolidate schools to reduce per-pupil costs (Koppejan 1985, 96).

More recently the question has arisen, whether a "neutral" private school, one that reflects no single belief or world view but is distinctive only in terms of pedagogy, may be considered equivalent to a public school offering the same program and (by law) committed to the same neutrality. Is there, in other words, a right to such a private school distinct from any issue of conscience? An advisory opinion of the Education Council in May 1985 found that there is such a right, since even the deliberate lack of common convictions can be seen as a "philosophical foundation." (Struik 1985).

The right also exists to choose among public schools, although local government is permitted by law to establish school attendance districts for public schools in order to promote their efficient utilization. The law provides that admission to public schools under such circumstances shall be on the basis of the attendance district, unless the parents have given written notice to the municipal authorities that they wish admission to a school in another attendance district

(Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen, Elementary Education Law, article 44). In a 1986 judgment based on statements made when the law was adopted, the Council of State found that a municipality had to grant this request (Vroon 1986).

Some recent proposals have been made to enforce attendance districts in the interest of containing "white flight" in racially changing urban areas, but these have run up against constitutional objections (see Dwarkasing 1987; Triesscheijn 1988).

While the freedoms to establish and to give a distinctive character to a school (stichting and richting) are well-protected by law, that of managing instruction (inrichting) is more limited by government requirements. The responsible authority manages the financial and personnel affairs of the school, appoints teachers, selects the curriculum and materials, and determines the disciplinary code as well as the role of religious instruction and other optional courses, but it must do these within the framework of extensive government regulation. Some private school advocates feel that these regulations threaten to make the freedom of richting meaningless (Jong Ozn. 1984).

The responsibility of government to ensure the competence of every school has led to detailed prescription in such areas as the minimum and maximum number of lesson periods a week and their length, the class size norms, the required competence of teachers, their salaries and rights, and the ways in which student achievement is measured at key transition points. Since the government pays all teacher salaries directly, and supplements from the responsible authority are not permitted, no way exists of rewarding effort or competence (James 1982, 15).

Government inspectors ensure that these requirements are met, and may advise but have no authority in instructional areas. The most explicit involvement of government with the content of instruction is in influencing the goals of vocationally oriented secondary schools by setting the standards by which students must demonstrate their competencies.

The basic funding available to each school is defined nationally, though the municipality may decide to provide extra staff for the public schools that it operates; in such cases, the local private schools are entitled to the same supplemental assistance. Schools may also seek (but not require) additional contributions from parents for supplemental services. The fact that private schools (especially the "neutral" schools with their sophisticated pedagogy) are more likely to receive such voluntary contributions, and also have less cost for bureaucratic overhead, leads to a common and perhaps justified perception that they are "more equal" than public schools in the resources available to them. A continual tension thus exists between highly decentralized school management and elaborately specific government guidelines (Leune 1981; Idenburg 1971).

The Background of Educational Pluralism

Schooling by (and to serve the purposes of) the State was implemented in the Netherlands when, in 1795, invading troops of the French Republic made it possible for their Dutch allies to establish a centrally organized system of popular education (Glenn 1988, for this and following).

This system relied for its success—widely admired in other countries—upon a network of government-appointed inspectors and the active involvement of a nationwide voluntary organization, the Society for the General Welfare. As a result of the schoolbooks published by this organization and the teachers it trained, Dutch popular education came to be permeated with what might be called a lowest-common-denominator Protestantism, a sort of Christianity without a Savior, intended to be morally uplifting to students and inoffensive to parents.

The success of government-sponsored education in the Netherlands in the early 19th century rested in part upon the concern of its organizers to reassure parents about the religious base of the instruction. The State, unlike that in contemporary France, made no effort to use schools as a weapon against a Church perceived as a threatening rival, though the Dutch reformers complained that the "fanaticism" of some parents and teachers was a difficulty.

This effort to conciliate the religious concerns of parents was much admired in other nations attempting to set up school systems during the same period. Horace Mann and his allies in the United States, for example, argued that "common" public schools should emulate the inoffensive religious teaching of Dutch schools. The statement by a Jewish community leader in Amsterdam, that his people had no objections to the sort of Christianity taught in the schools, was widely cited in favor of this moralizing and sentimental religious teaching.

The common public school enjoyed strong support from both liberals and conservatives among the Dutch elite, who saw it as the means by which the nation would be knit together and the working classes taught to be moral and reasonable. Unfortunately for their hopes, the school became the focus of 70 years of political struggles that mobilized large groups of Calvinists and Roman Catholics among the common people to demand schooling corresponding to their own religious convictions. Far from knitting the nation together, the religious teaching provided in public schools became a major source of dissension.

Those who regarded nonsectarian religious teaching as inadequate, if not pernicious, were at first a small minority among the educated elite, but their numbers grew as political reform and economic development brought wider participation in public life. Their position evolved through several stages during the course of the 19th century. At first, they asked that public schools be distinguished on a religious basis, with a right for parents to choose a Catholic or a Protestant or a neutral public school as in Germany. During the 1850s, this demand was abandoned for more effective guarantees of the right to operate private confessional schools, making this right depend upon central government approval, free from interference by local authorities. In the following decades—and especially as rising expenditures for public education created competitive pressures—the Calvinist and Catholic political parties concentrated on gaining public subsidies for their schools.

These moves were strongly resisted by the Liberals who dominated Dutch politics after midcentury and who, in common with their counterparts in other countries at the time, saw the loyalty of the common people to religious traditions as a sign of clericalism and a major impediment to social progress. Although the 1848 Constitution guaranteed the right (subject to meeting government requirements) to operate a school, it also required that government provide for education. This was interpreted by the Liberals to mean that public schools must be established even in communities where every parent had chosen a confessional school. A national organization (from which the Association for Public Education [VOO] is descended) was formed to oppose confessional education, and the leading Liberal politician made a notorious speech attacking the Roman Catholic and Calvinist religious "fanatics." Calvinist leader Abraham Kuyper replied that, if the Liberal school program prevailed, the lion—symbol of freedom—should be removed from the shield of the Netherlands, to be replaced by an eagle with a lamb in its claws!

In 1878, the Liberals had their opportunity, enacting educational requirements and providing subsidies to municipal schools that would make it much more difficult for confessional schooling to survive. This threat aroused the Calvinist and Roman Catholic "little people" (Kuyper's phrase) who made good use of a broadened electoral suffrage; by 1888, their political parties had gained a majority in the Parliament. Thinking that they were smothering the last flickers of traditional religion, the Liberals had managed to fan it into vigorous life—and, in so doing, to mobilize a political opposition which would leave them out of power for most of the subsequent century.

The new school law adopted in 1889 provided the same 30 percent national subsidy for confessional as for municipal schools, though the latter alone received local tax support. Over the next three decades support grew for removing even this distinction and extending full public funding to confessional schools. Parents would thus be able to send their children to confessional schools on the same basis as to municipal schools. During the period 1917–20, an agreement was reached among all political parties to make this a basic guarantee and a cornerstone of educational policy.

This "Pacification," the settlement of the 70-year struggle over schools, was the basis for tremendous growth of the portion of Dutch life divided along denominational lines during the 1920s and 1930s. Emancipation of the common people, for whom Roman Catholic or Calvinist beliefs were central, and their emergence into public life bringing their convictions with them, required organization. The passions and the habits of organization developed during the struggle for confessional schooling found expression across the whole range of public and private life.

This structural pluralism, known as "pillarization" (verzuiling), is a vertical differentiation affecting—at its height, in the 1950s—virtually all dimensions of Dutch society. One Dutch political scientist notes that "verzuiling is inexplicable apart from the 'school struggle'" (Akkermans 1980, 159). Observers disagree on the number of pillars: certainly Calvinist and Catholic and neutral organizations were created across the board, and, in a number of spheres, a Socialist alternative and a fundamentalist Calvinist pillar as well. The diversity in Dutch education owes much more to the accommodations reached among these social groups than to a principled commitment to foster individual choice as such.

As the issue of confessional education had led the way to the development of power blocks in the political arena, so the implementation of such education after the Pacification of 1920 played a leading role in the institutionalization of confessional differences. Only in the past few years has the growing secularization of Dutch society led to a slight decline in the proportion of total elementary enrollment in private (predominantly, Roman Catholic and Protestant-Christian) schools (see table 1).

Secularization has affected Catholic school enrollment more than

Table 1.—Percentage of students enrolled in public and private elementary schools in selected years: Netherlands, 1850–1980

Year	Public	Private
1850	77	23
1880	75	25
1910	62	38
1940	27	73
1970	28	72
1980	32	68

SOURCE: N.L. Dodde, "Particulier initiatief in het Nederlandse onderwijssysteem," typescript, 1986.

Protestant; indeed, the ultraconservative Protestant schools (known as "Reformational" as contrasted with "Protestant-Christian") experienced strong growth through the 1970s.

A New School Struggle?

Despite the imposing scope and elaboration of the system of differentiated schooling and parent choice in the Netherlands, the Pacification has recently been called into question. A new struggle over schooling is troubling Dutch public life and has thrown open for discussion the assumptions and principles upon which the present system rests. The resulting debate is relevant to the hesitating attempts in the United States to decide how education should function in a democracy marked by strong differences of convictions and values.

While the immediate occasion for the present conflict is the need to consolidate the Dutch education system in the face of declining enrollments and budgetary constraints, the debate draws its sharpness from three developments in Dutch society.

The first is a growing secularization, in which the weakening of traditional religious loyalties has reduced not only church attendance but also commitment to verzuilde ("pillarized") institutions. This secularization has led to questions about the continuing need for confessional schooling, at least on the present scale.

The second development, related in a complex fashion to the first, is a certain loss of nerve among those upon whom confessional schooling depends to confirm its purpose, from church hierarchies to teachers. If schools are no longer distinctively Catholic or Protestant, how does their maintenance with public funds guarantee liberty of conscience?

The third development is a new and aggressive advocacy of the common school, seen as the means of bridging not only confessional and class differences, but growing ethnic differences within Dutch society as well.

One of the lasting heritages of the Pacification has been a determination by Dutch political and communal leaders not to allow it to be called into question, lest the divisive school struggle be revived. Their actual preferences for public or confessional schooling have been expressed in those nuances of policy that the Dutch are so skilled at reading.

This consensus among the major political parties has been disturbed by the increasing militancy of the Association for Public Education (VOO), a "propaganda organization for public education" (Leune 1981, 409) representing some 4,000 public school associations and parent councils. The VOO has called for a new "school struggle" to sweep away what it considers the outmoded and counterproductive relics of verzuiling. In alliance with the union representing educators employed in government-operated schools (ABOP), the VOO has argued that confessional education is neither demanded by parents nor provided by most Catholic and Protestant schools, and presents an obstacle to the "constructive educational policy" that national and local government should be free to pursue in the interest of social justice and equality (Schoten and Wansink 1984).

These acts of aggression did not go unmarked by supporters of confessional schooling. Protestant education leader Klaas de Jong Ozn. asked whether the pacification was in danger and denied that public schools were truly neutral in a sense that would make them acceptable for Christian parents. The VOO itself was trying to give public schools a distinctive richting, while the ABOP made no secret of its desire to promote a distinctive leftist ideological flavor, he charged. Many public schools, he suggested, were strongly marked by the form of indoctrination sought by the Humanist League. Similar charges have been made by the policy specialist of the Central Bureau for Catholic Education (Jong Ozn. 1985a; Walstijn 1985).

Two staff members of the VOO, Fons van Schoten and Hans Wansink, argued in a controversial book, in 1984, that a loss of distinctive identity on the part of confessional schools calls into question their claim upon public support as an alternative to public and nonsectarian private schools. In contrast with the pattern of recent decades, in which private schooling has been the rule and the government "filled in" where that failed to meet the needs of particular groups or areas, these advocates of public schooling argued that the common school should again become the norm for Dutch education.

A "new school struggle" is necessary—indeed has already begun—according to Van Schoten and Wansink. In the first place, they argue, the evolution of society requires that schooling be seen as a primary instrument of government policy. They do not hesitate to refer to this as a "state pedagogy," while conceding that to call it a "constructive education policy" will be less controversial.

> Education, as a collective provision, serves to provide for the constantly changing needs of the community. That is what the society pays for. The authorities commission education to make a contribution to the removal of social inequalities and cultural apartheid as the precondition for the full participation of everyone in the life of the society. The quality of this contribution forms the main issue of the new school struggle. (Van Schoten and Wansink 1984, 93)

Because private (and especially confessional) schooling was established to perpetuate rather than to remove group loyalties, it cannot contribute to cultural integration. "Whenever a private school seeks to contribute to cultural integration, it is faced with a dilemma: give preference to its testimony or to dialogue with those who think otherwise." (Van Schoten and Wansink 1984, 94)

Such a dialogue would require treating those views as of equal value, say Van Schoten and Wansink, and expressing this equality concretely by the appointment of teachers, parent council and governing board members who hold these views. It would require, indeed, placing the identity, the richting, of the school up for discussion. A private school that refused to make such fundamental changes in its nature and direction could not, by Van Schoten and Wansink's definition, be of equal quality with a public school in terms of the new expectations placed upon education. Thus the authorities would be justified, even compelled, to withdraw financial support. A private school that *did* accept such conditions might as well be a public school in any case; having lost its distinctive richting, it would have lost its claim upon support as an educational alternative.

The Motivations of Parents

The second line of argument employed by Van Schoten and Wansink starts from the other end, from the demands and interests of parents. Since the slogan under which the "school struggle" was waged was "the school belongs to parents," they seek to show that the present verzuilde system does not respond to what parents want.

Their argument here has two parts. On the one hand, they cite the findings of parent surveys to argue that confessional education is a matter of secondary concern for most parents with children in Protestant or Catholic schools. On the other, they point to the resistance of the leadership of confessional education to a legislative proposal requiring all schools to elect decision-making councils representing all of the parents. This they take as evidence that confessional education is rooted in the distinctions of a no-longer-relevant past, and is afraid to be subject to the priorities of today's parents.

The survey cited by Van Schoten and Wansink to make the first point asked parents what reasons were important or unimportant in choosing a secondary school. Responses were in four categories: "very important," "important," "indifferent," and "unimportant and very unimportant." Critics of the present system of support for confessional education take as significant that only 12 percent of parents said it was very important that the school "base its education on the religion or world view of our family." On the other hand, the combined important/very important responses on this item were 40 percent, with 41 per cent saying this was unimportant/very unimportant. By comparison, 31 percent of parents found the quality of the school building important or very important. For 88 percent it was important/very important that the school "operate on the basis of ideas about the education of children that we support" (Boef, Bronneman, and Konings 1983).

What can one make of such results? Certainly not that choice is unimportant to Dutch parents, so they could be satisfied with a single type of schooling. For seven out of eight the educational philosophy of a school is important, and it is fair to assume that this means they are not satisfied with every variety. Religious identity of a school is less significant as a motivation for making a particular choice, though 40 percent represents a large constituency.

A second point that Van Schoten and Wansink seek to demonstrate with parent surveys is that far more confessional education is available—and State-subsidized—in the Netherlands than parents actually want. Unfortunately for their case, the data they provide seem to show a fairly close correspondence of supply and demand, at least at the elementary level, particularly if those parents who do not select one of the four major options are left out of account (table 2).

The category of "cooperative" schools (samenwerkingsscholen) refers to those that bring together several richtingen, for example, Protestant and Catholic, or Catholic and Neutral (public or private) in a community where enrollments do not justify two schools. For some

Table 2.—Comparison of parent preferences for schools of varying richting with distribution of students, by type of school and richting: Netherlands, 1979 and 1980

Richting	Preschool	Elementary	General secondary
	Parents expressing preference, 1979		
Public	34.2	33.6	36.3
Protestant	25.6	25.7	25.0
Catholic	31.7	32.2	26.6
Other private	2.2	2.5	3.3
Cooperative	6.2	6.0	9.9
	Distribution of students, 1980		
Public	30.1	31.4	20.7
Protestant	28.3	28.1	24.8
Catholic	36.3	37.9	36.8
Other private	5.3	2.6	17.7

SOURCE: Data calculated from A.P.M. van Schoten and Hans Wansink, *De nieuwe schoolstrijd: Knelpunten en conflicten in de hedendaagse onderwijspolitiek*, Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema, and Holkema, 1984.

educators and parents, this is seen as preferable to any of the traditional options, as a way to foster "encounter" and tolerance.

This survey, conducted in 1979 among approximately 2,500 parents with children at all ages under 16, is often cited by those who urge that public schools become the norm in the Netherlands. The researchers found that almost all parents with children in kindergarten, elementary or academic secondary schools could identify the richting of the school, but that confusion existed among parents of vocational school students. Although only 10 percent of the students were in public vocational schools, the parents of 35 percent reported that their children were in public schools. Conversely, 34 percent of the students were in nonconfessional private vocational schools (often sponsored by business and industry), but the parents of only 3 percent of the parents reported that.

In other words, the researchers concluded, "neutral private vocational education was obviously considered, by those using it, as public" (Boef-van der Meulen 1985, 83). That such a confusion exists is perhaps to be expected, given that few parents pay much attention to the legal sponsorship of a school, though most are aware of whether it is Catholic, or Protestant, or deliberately secular.

An extensive study of the reasons for parent choice has been published in three stages in recent years by researchers working in the Utrecht area. Their conclusions seem to reflect their own agreement with Van Schoten and Wansink's position about the oversupply of religious schooling, but the data support a contrary position equally well. As so often in such cases, everything depends upon the questions asked and the way responses are grouped.

Parents were asked about their primary reason for selecting an elementary school. Of 666 sets of parents who responded to the written inquiry, the researchers reported, 70 percent stated that school quality was the most important consideration, and for only 22 percent was richting the most important. This response seems to suggest an oversupply of religious schooling in the Netherlands.

This conclusion is misleading, however. Many parents who value schooling shaped by a particular religious tradition would nevertheless put quality even higher; indeed, it is striking that as many as 30 percent of the parents were willing to give quality the second place to another school characteristic. A more satisfactory analysis of the strength of motivation would ask what proportion of parents would accept a school at some distance from their home. Considered in this way, the figures suggest a rather different picture: 54 percent of the parents regarded the richting of the school as more important than the distance from home to school. It is fair to conclude, then, that for something more than half of the parents the religious or ideological characteristics of the school were an important consideration in making a selection. For 27 percent of the parents, richting was more important than quality, while for 44 percent richting was the least important consideration.

Another interesting result of this study is the opportunity to compare the proportion of parents who characterized themselves as having religious convictions with the proportion with a preference for particular school choices. Of the total sample, 35 percent identified themselves as "confessing" Protestants, Catholics, or "other" (mostly conservative Protestants); 50 percent expressed a preference for a Protestant or Catholic school, and 32 percent for a public school. If this sample is representative of the Netherlands as a whole, the proportion wanting public schools and the proportion of total elementary enrollment in such schools correspond almost exactly. These results do not suggest the kind of mismatch between parent wishes and the availability of public education claimed by Van Schoten and Wansink.

A final point from the study is that parents in the Utrecht area were almost exactly divided (30 to 37 percent) between those who preferred a traditional or a "renewed" pedagogy. Asked about aspects of pedagogy, 52 per cent preferred what the researchers characterized as a "repressive" classroom—perhaps better described in American terms as "structured"—while 25 percent preferred a "permissive" atmosphere. Again 52 percent wanted the content of education to be central, while 31 percent wanted the child to be central. (Eck, Antink, and Veraart 1986)

Such surveys do not discredit the present system of parent choice in the Netherlands; to the contrary, the fact that parents differ significantly on what they want suggests that diversity in schooling meets a real need. The mistake is to interpret the data in terms of an either/or, as though schools can only vary in richting or in pedagogy, not in both. The constitutional guarantees of educational freedom, though intended primarily to protect liberty of conscience, have the effect of providing space for pedagogical diversity as well. There is no single model of Catholic or of Protestant schooling in the Netherlands; at least as much diversity exists among schools in each group as among public schools in the United States.

That the argument from the preferences of parents is not truly central to the case for a "new school struggle" becomes evident when this argument is set beside the first, and more central, reason given by Van Schoten and Wansink for restoring the primacy of the public school.

If the public common school is primarily an instrument of "constructive educational policy" for the government, it can, in the last analysis, matter little what parents want. While confessional organizations are accused of resisting the imposition of elected parent councils to supplement governing boards and possibly to change the richting of schools, the VOO concedes that such councils could in no case imprint a distinctive flavor upon a public school. "It is in fact of no significance," Van Schoten and Wansink wrote in answer to a Catholic critic, "that a specific group of parents in a specific public school may perhaps have a strongly experienced group feeling. That may be fine for the group of parents, but it can have no influence upon the public school as such." (Van Schoten and Wansink 1985, 7) Thus the VOO is an advocate for more participation by parents in decision making, so long as the parents endorse what the VOO takes to be the mission and character of the public school.

Although parent surveys do not really undermine the case for the present organization of education in the Netherlands, their role in making decisions about the provision of schooling is hotly debated. Leaders in confessional schooling resist proposals that the number of Catholic or Protestant schools needed in an area should be determined by social science research rather than, as at present, by the number of children whose families officially belong to one denomination or another. The fact that parents demonstrably choose Protestant or Catholic schools is more significant for school planning, they argue, than whether they attend church. Surveys conducted by municipalities (the sponsors of public schools and thus, in a sense, the rivals of private schools) that ask parents to specify their reasons for choosing Catholic schools are an interference with the rights of conscience, Catholic policy analyst Wilbert van Walstijn has argued recently. "The best basis for research continues to be the actual choice itself. That is true for political elections, it is also true for school choices" (Walstijn 1987).

Walstijn and other advocates for confessional schooling concede a decline in the proportion of parents surveyed for whom religion is a central consideration in choosing a school, especially among Catholics. A 1966 study found that 86 percent of Catholic parents wanted a Catholic school, compared with 65 percent who expressed such a preference in 1979. By contrast, among evangelical Protestants the proportion remained high, at 96 and 90 percent in the two surveys. Among members of the Hervormde Kerk, the "mainline" Protestant denomination which traditionally has supported public schools, the proportion preferring a religious school actually increased, from 54 percent to 61 percent, while those preferring a public school dropped from 40 to 26 percent (Walstijn and Boissevain 1981).

This issue has been researched several times. In the midsixties, a time of great turmoil in the Catholic Church in the Netherlands, J. A. van Kemenade conducted a study of Catholic parents and teachers. He found a good deal of uncertainty among the staff of Catholic schools about the legitimacy of the religious aspect of their enterprise, but continuing support among parents. In a sense, the parents believed in what the teachers were supposed to be doing more than the teachers did! Among parents of elementary children the Catholic identity of the school was important for 87 percent, compared with 70 percent among parents of secondary and 50 percent among parents of vocational school students. The simplest explanation of these differences is that each vocational school is likely to enroll many students for whom it is the only one in the vicinity with a particular program (Kemenade 1968).

In the early seventies, a study was made of the reasons that parents chose Protestant-Christian schools. For 77 percent of the parents the Christian character of the instruction was an important consideration, and 69 percent wanted a school that would shield children from "worldly ideas." A third important motive had to do with the atmosphere of the school: the Protestant school was seen as more concerned with the happiness and personal development of the child and less with worldly success, and teachers were seen as more approachable.

The researchers categorized the degree of motivation of the parents to choose a Protestant school by the number of reasons that they cited. They found that 93 percent of the most highly motivated would make that choice even if it required that the child cross a heavily traveled road, compared with 48 percent of those who offered no reasons for preferring a Protestant school.

This group of highly motivated parents placed the primary responsibility for education on parents (69 percent) rather than on the government (21 percent) or the Church (4 percent). When asked how Protestant schools differed from public schools, far more gave answers related to atmosphere and values than to quality as such (Flaman, de Jonge, and Westra 1974).

A recent wide-scale study of the effectiveness of secondary schools found that, in fact, both Protestant and Catholic schools produced better results on cognitive measures and also on the satisfaction of students and teachers with their experience. The author concluded that this result had to do in part with the clarity of identity these schools possessed, and urged that public schools seek to develop something of the same quality (Marwijk Kooy-von Baumhauer 1984, 157–65).

What of the concern expressed by public school advocates, that the present system may be depriving many parents who object to religiously based schools of their right to a neutral education? Thus Inzicht, the magazine published by the Association for Public Education frequently carries accounts of communities in which public schools are allegedly insufficiently available (for example, Goossens 1986; Jansen 1986; Sekreve 1985; Vries and Wansink 1985).

Walstijn found, in his study of the choice motives of Catholic parents, that all elementary and secondary school parents, and all but one of the kindergarten parents surveyed in Amsterdam and in the north of the country reported that they had real choices. In the heavily Catholic south—source of most complaints from public school advocates—20 percent of elementary and 40 percent of kindergarten parents reported that they did *not* have a real choice; this does not mean, of course, that they were necessarily unhappy with the school available. The study also found that Catholic parents in the south were less likely than those in other areas to volunteer the Catholic richting of a school as a primary reason for choosing it; this may simply mean that Catholics in areas where they are in the minority must work more consciously at retaining their identity and that of their children. Given that, in the south, the only schools nearby may be Catholic, religion may not become a conscious reason for choosing (Walstijn 1983).

Political Parties and the Schools

Van Schoten and Wansink's fundamental critique of the present structure of Dutch education, with its institutionalized diversity, has not been picked up as a policy option by any of the major political parties. The tiny Pacifist Socialist Party did call for promotion of public education as a way to overcome what it saw as the unfortunate structural pluralism (verzuiling) of Dutch life, and the Communist Party contended that private education provided for the conservative parties a power-base that would have to be eliminated. Not even these fringe parties, however, called the educational freedom guaranteed by the Dutch Constitution directly into question (Beljon and de Jonge 1984).

A single State school is no longer on the agenda of the Dutch Liberal Party (VVD). State Secretary for Education (and prominent Liberal) N. J. Ginjaar-Maas concedes that her party sought to create, in the 19th century, a "centralizing-autocratic education system," but insists upon the commitment of present-day Liberals to ever more educational freedom (Ginjaar-Maas 1976, 99).

In a discussion paper entitled "Liberal Position '90 (A Future Rich in Opportunity—Responsible Freedom)" at the end of 1987, the VVD stressed that the role of government in education had been too controlling and paternalistic. Rather than be concerned with the details of school management, education policy should concentrate on helping schools take responsibility for regulating themselves. By setting clear goals for student achievement, government could make it possible for the constitutional guarantees of educational freedom to be expressed in more truly diverse schooling. Thus choice would have more real content than at present (*School en Besturen*, April 1988).

Nor is a State monopoly of education the official position of the Labor Party (PvdA), though there is a recurrent tension between the desire to use schools as a means of reaching social goals and a commitment to allowing parents and students to determine the convictions and view of society that will inform education. Labor has made a conscious effort in recent decades to be a "breakthrough party" that transcends the old ideological rigidities; this makes it important not to frighten away potential supporters who want school choice (Beljon and de Jonge 1984, 102). This is, indeed, not a new position, since the Socialist Party (Labor's forerunner) made a strategic decision in 1902 to abandon its opposition to confessional schooling, and thus paved the way for the Pacification.

Despite recurrent suspicion by confessional organizations that Labor has a hidden agenda to favor public schools, Labor spokespersons on education policy take care to stress the support of the party for "educational freedom." David van Ooijen insists that Socialists do not want to identify themselves with the public school. Jacques Wallage calls for less rather than more State oversight in education, and argues that there is much in common between social democratic thinking about placing responsibility at the "base," and the Catholic and neo-Calvinist concepts of "subsidiarity" and "sphere sovereignty" (Ooijen 1986; Wallage 1986).

Although continuing to express commitment to parent choice and the freedom to operate private schools with government support, Labor makes no secret of its conviction that the present range of choices, based (at the elementary level) almost exclusively on the religious identity of schools, is out of date. The party's position is that the present system is made up of denominational cartels that in fact suppress real competition that would stimulate the quality of schools (*School en Besturen*, April 1988).

In short, even the Labor Party, though it flirted a decade ago with a preference for a single State system of education, is concerned to distance itself from such an idea today. The diversity and parent choice that characterize Dutch education are popular, and many Labor supporters send their own children to private schools. Despite the urging of Association for Public Education chairman Lex van der Jagt, in 1983, that the Labor Party come out squarely for the public school as a matter of principle, there is no indication that this will happen any time soon.

The Christian Democrats—a merger of the Calvinist and Catholic political parties which were founded in the 19th century as a result of the controversies over educational freedom—are, naturally, strongly in favor of the present system. It is notable that the confessional parties have supplied virtually all of the ministers of education in the various coalition governments and regard this as a key position in their overall program.

A 1983 proposal, in the face of the need for cuts in the education budget, that the costs directly attributable to the verzuiling of education be determined drew conflicting legislative motions from all three major parties, based upon fine nuances of intention. Catholic educational leader L. A. Struik used the occasion to seek to link the Dutch Socialists to the unpopular proposals of the Mitterand government in France to bring Catholic schools under direct government control. Socialist spokesmen Van Kemenade and David Van Ooijen denied this charge with unusual heat.

Clearly, the issue of cost is relevant to discussions of parent choice. The present system of funding schools has the effect of ratcheting costs up. The support provided to each private school is determined by the costs of local public schools at the same grade level; there is thus no incentive to limit costs.

A 1987 doctoral dissertation concluded that the present organization of parent choice—the verzuiling of education—involves additional costs amounting to several hundred million dollars a year at the elementary level alone. These additional costs, J. B. J. Koelman pointed out, arose from the way in which private school costs are based upon those of public schools, and from the maintenance of many very small schools.

Koelman concluded that these additional costs could be reduced, without eliminating parent choice, by administrative reforms including raising the minimum size for a school and increasing the distance that students could be required to go to attend the school of their parents' choice. Larger enrollment areas would presumably require a certain amount of student transportation, as in other countries; such transportation is already subsidized with public funds when necessary in the name of educational freedom.

Parents' Desire for Distinctive Schools

Dutch parents who want schooling for their children that is strongly marked with religious perspectives may be disappointed, despite the constitutional guarantees of choice. This has less to do with issues of funding or of government interference than with the difficulty that many Catholic and Protestant schools experience in maintaining their distinctive identity.

One of the main problems seems to be a loss of conviction among teachers that there is a distinctive religious heritage worth passing along to their students. Goal statements developed by school faculties tend to stress "the ideals of Jesus Christ" or "respect for human diversity" rather than the distinctives of Catholicism or Protestantism. In Van Kemenade's 1966 study of parents and teachers associated with Catholic schools at various levels, 57 percent of the parents declared that the maintenance of Catholic schooling was necessary, but only 30 percent of the teachers agreed. While teachers generally asserted that it was part of their professional responsibility to contribute to the religious formation of their students, only one in five reported that they deliberately sought in their teaching to stress the religious and ethical implications of the material (Kemenade 1968, 229).

The decision of the Catholic bishops in the sixties to replace the catechism with more open-ended religious instruction has been deplored by some as leading to confusion at the school level. "Belief is not a question of learning something," the bishops told the faithful in a 1965 Lenten letter, "but primarily of living something." Incontestably true as this statement might be, it seemed an open invitation to the Catholic school to stress social concerns to the exclusion of specific doctrines (Coleman 1978, 137).

Further confusion was caused by a proposal, advanced in 1972 by a leading Catholic educator, that public and confessional schools work together in a "tertium" or "third way," based upon "a well-considered choice for spiritual pluriformity." The main reason for developing this option, State Secretary for Education C. E. Schelfhout told Parliament, was that citizens demanded it for principled reasons. It was thus not to be seen merely as a way to increase efficiency or to lower costs, but as a step forward in Dutch education, away from the verzuilde system that he had earlier served as director of the Central Office for Catholic Education.

This incident, which produced more sensation than concrete results, can be seen as reflecting a "loss of nerve" on the part of the leaders of confessional education. For a time uncertainty prevailed about the essentials of the faith that could and indeed must be taught to the rising generation, and a growing sense arose that a new pedagogy was called for, one that would in some ways be the antithesis of what had gone before. One could imagine Catholic and Protestant schools simply teaching less and less doctrinal material, and confining themselves to the development of secular knowledge and skills. This is not at all what happened. The new pedagogical ideal was as heavily value laden as that which it replaced.

Equally uncertain signals came from the Council for Affairs of Church and School of the largest Protestant church. In 1975, the Council expressed a preference for schools in which various points of view were represented and respected, and one of its leaders, B. Buddingh', warned that "the Christian school" might serve primarily as an instrument of "propaganda and the maintenance of a particular lifestyle." The next year, he expressed his reservations about "the school as a single-family dwelling;" his strong preference was for the "dialogue school," in which stress was laid upon the two "core themes of the Gospel: Liberation and Solidarity." Several years later, the Council expressed its concern that "exclusive maintenance of the traditional verzuilde education fails to do justice to new developments that take account of pedagogical heterogeneity." A recent Council report expressed concern about the negative effects of the verzuiling of education, and called for schools in which "rules a climate of tolerance, in which teachers and children and the children among themselves can accept and respect one another, precisely with respect to their differences" (Beljon and de Jonge 1984, 90; Gilhuis, *Pleidooi* (no date), 13; Buddingh' 1976, 78–9; Raad voor de Zaken van Kerk en School (no date), 13, 9).

Professor N. L. Dodde of Rotterdam and Utrecht Universities, a distinguished historian of education, has called into question whether freedom of education continues to have real content in the Netherlands. Dodde suggests that, in a time of declining enrollment, the freedom to establish new schools is largely meaningless and forced mergers undermine the guarantee of a distinctive character, while increased government regulation limits management freedom as well. He has predicted that confessional education will essentially destroy itself from within.

Confessional schools have become, he believes, nothing more than Protestant- or Catholic-flavored versions of public education: "There is no pedagogical justification for the school struggle." The irresistible tendency, Dodde stated, was toward "general" schooling, not as a matter of educational policy but because of the development of society. This schooling would be based essentially upon humanistic educational goals. (Dodde 1986a, 1986b).

Public school advocate Fons van Schoten of the Association for Public Education asserted, even more emphatically, that the secularization of confessional education is proceding apace "from the inside out," despite the successful public resistance of its interest groups (Schoten 1983).

This line of argument is contested by representatives of confessional education, and concern for the identity of their schools does indeed seem to be resurgent. In some respects this reflects a reaction from the excesses of secularization, spurred on by the taunts of those who question whether the denominational labels attached to schools continue to have any real significance.

The appointment by Pope John Paul II of several new, more conservative bishops has led to a stiffening of the Catholic Church's insistence on the distinctive identity of schools identified with (though no longer directly operated by) that denomination. The Bishop of Roermond, in particular, has insisted recently that the board of each school in his diocese calling itself Catholic modify its bylaws to permit him to appoint a personal representative, with a veto over any decisions considered to be in conflict with the Catholic character of the school. No teachers are to be appointed or retained at such schools who are not prepared to cooperate in the realization of the goals of Catholic education, as expressed in orthodox teaching and a virtuous personal lifestyle (*Schoolbestuur*, November 1987).

Although the president of the National Catholic School Council expressed concern about re-imposition of hierarchical authority, it is significant that, in the same breath, he conceded that Catholic education had, in many communities, lost its distinctive profile. Parent choice, he agreed, should be made on the basis of a clear understanding of what is offered, including the norms, values, and world view of Catholic education.

A Protestant organization founded more than a century ago, the Union: School and Gospel, is devoting major resources to helping Protestant-Christian schools express a distinctive Christian identity in every aspect of curriculum and program. Director (and former State Secretary for Education) Klaas de Jong Ozn. noted recently with satisfaction that Protestant school people no longer needed to be convinced that it was necessary to be intensively involved with questions of identity: "This has slowly become a life-and-death concern for many Christian schools" (Jong Ozn 1988).

Over the last two decades, a network of more conservative Protestant schools has developed, known as Reformational Schools. This network now operates a government-supported teachers' college in a handsome new facility and publishes a journal dedicated to defining a pedagogy sharply distinctive from that of other schools.

The difference between Protestant-Christian and Reformational schools is based essentially on a different relationship with the Calvinist roots they share. Reformational schools base education upon the classic formulations of doctrine, and continual attempts are made to draw out the pedagogical implications of Reformation and Puritan texts (Middelkoop 1983; Golverdingen 1985b). Protestant-Christian schools, by contrast, orient themselves directly on the Bible and attempt to apply it freshly to contemporary challenges.

In the political battles that led to public funding for confessional schooling, the mainline Protestant Hervormde Church was, in general, a supporter of the public common school. Organizational support for the "school struggle" on the Protestant side came largely from groups that had broken away from the Hervormde Church in search of more orthodox Calvinist teaching. Since these groups were continually splintering from each other, the political leaders of the school struggle deliberately chose the broad platform of "a school with the Bible," without further doctrinal definition (Gilhuis 1987, 20).

For certain strictly Calvinist groups, the Protestant-Christian schools that resulted from these efforts were unsatisfactory; indeed, some preferred to put their children in public schools where there was simply an absence of religious teaching rather than the possibility of doctrinally inadequate teaching. During the 1920s, an increasing number of schools were established as alternatives to local Protestant-Christian schools, and the pace picked up after World War II; at present, they enroll some 30,000 students, with 122 elementary schools and a scattering of other types.

Neutral private schools, including 190 elementary schools, have coordinating organizations parallel to those in Catholic and Protestant education, but it would be contrary to their nature to seek to define a single identity. Most have been organized to provide a highly distinctive pedagogy, whether based on the theories of Maria Montessori or Rudolf Steiner, Helen Parkhurst or Peter Petersen.

Despite the right of parent choice, controversy exists over the extent to which individual public schools may become distinctive in an effort to attract students; from a legal perspective, the Education Council found, freedom of richting applies only to private schools. All public schools represent the same richting and should, implicitly, have no distinct flavor.

Some public school advocates are eager to define a positive rather than a negative character, in order to stress the distinctive mission of public schooling in relation to social renewal. They are concerned at research indicating that most municipalities make little effort to translate a "public school identity" into concrete pedagogy and school climate (Detering and Kalkman 1986a). On the other hand, others argue, the unique role of the public school is to be acceptable to everyone, particularly by showing respect for individual religious convictions, and thus it should not become the confessional school of nonsectarianism, even though this might express the preference of most parents who choose public education (Graaf 1983, 43).

Recurrent calls have been made for privatizing public education, or at least for placing individual public schools under "responsible authorities" that are closer to the school than is municipal government, in the interest of effectiveness and coherence (Wallage 1983). Surveys indicate that, for most parents, the distinguishing characteristic of public schools is their neutrality, not their public governance. Social Democrats in particular are divided between a belief that education should be carried out by government in the interest of broad social goals, and a commitment to parent involvement and responsiveness to the desires of those most directly affected by schooling (Leune 1983).

In a discussion paper issued at the end of 1987, the conservative Liberal Party (VVD) called repeatedly for giving public schools the legal status of neutral private schools, while their coalition partners, the Christian Democrats (CDA), urged that public schools be privatized (*School en Besturen*, April 1988). In budget debates in March 1988, the Cabinet suggested that savings could be made in the education budget by abolishing municipal education departments altogether. Minister of Education W. J. Deetman pointed out, however, that some parents choose, as a matter of principle, schools operated directly by government and committed (by the Constitution) to respect all beliefs and convictions, and such choices must be respected as well as those for confessional schooling. If no public schools existed, he added, more government interference with private schools might be needed to protect the right of every parent to an inoffensive education; thus the result of eliminating public schools might be to reduce, rather than to increase, diversity (*Schoolbestuur*, April 1988).

Prospects for Continued Debate

In 1975, J. A. Van Kemenade, then minister of education for the Labor Party, issued a discussion memorandum called "Contours of a Future Education System in the Netherlands." The role of the government, as presented in this document, was no longer primarily concerned with the fair distribution of funds among various types of schools. Through "constructive educational policy," society could be reshaped. As characterized by Dodde, "in constructive educational policy the national government takes many tasks upon itself out of the attitude that the educational system is too comprehensive and too differentiated to be left to the opinions and activities of well-meaning individuals and groups in Dutch society, whether expert or not" (Dodde 1984).

Hans Wansink, of the anti-private school Association for Public Education, has insisted that "the essential thing is no longer the right to provide education according to the inward-turning vision of a group sharing a common view of life, but 'the right to individual fulfillment.'" Thus the claims of group-life upon the individual are to be minimized and the present system of education is seen as a principal obstacle to "the removal of social inequality and cultural apartheid." The subtitle of the 1983 article in which Wansink expressed these views is "from verzuiling ["pillarization"] to encounter as the model for emancipation" (Wansink 1982a); ironically, however, it was precisely the creation of confessional schools and other verzuilde institutions that provided structure to the "emancipation" of the Catholic and Protestant common people in the 19th century.

In the spirit of the "new school struggle," the principal of a public school in Utrecht told members of the nonconfessional teachers' union that "private education is essentially a form of segregation, and segregation is in modern society an outdated and discriminatory phenomenon." Another supporter of public schools argued that confessional schooling was based upon indoctrination and managed "to form a group of slavish, locked-in believers scarcely able to take the slightest self-reliant actions." The result was "deformed personalities, certainly never free from anxiety and permanently dependent upon those who present themselves as their 'spiritual' leaders." Only public schools could prevent this unfortunate result (G. J. Erdtsieck, quoted in Jong Ozn. 1985c; Th. G. Bolleman, quoted in Gilhuis, *Pleidooi*, 9).

In short, the confessional school and the Pacification upon which its present status rests are being called into question to an unprecedented extent. The attacks rest less upon solid evidence that parents have ceased to value religious education for their children (whatever their own convictions) than they do upon a shift in definition of the mission of schooling.

Those who are pressing for a redefinition of this mission to include a broad responsibility for reshaping society are in fact—consciously or not—returning to the nation-building goals of those who first established the government-controlled system of popular education in the first decades of the 19th century. They believe in the "makeability" of society, the possibility of creating a new form of humanity free of the limitations and prejudices of earlier generations.

Despite the substantial secularization of Dutch life, however, there is no sign that parents are any more willing than their predecessors in the 19th century to give up the hard-won freedom to choose the schools in which their children are to be educated. Even the religious character of that schooling seems to be in continuing demand.

> There is a sometimes latent, sometimes open longing for experience of God. The Catholic school is still for many, whether in the church or marginal, a place where parents want to find something of their tradition, their youth; they seek something that will make up for what they themselves feel they lack, they expect something that they can't always express in words, they feel something of the danger of letting children grow up in an I-culture where self-fulfillment takes the place of growing in responsibility for others. Living in a spiritually leveling mass culture they expect from the Catholic school specifically that it will not give automatic adherence to a society whose lack of values and norms has led to an almost absolute moral relativism in which each may go his way and in which each is the final

> authority for himself, so that shared responsibility has become an almost incomprehensible virtue. (Struik 1983, 22)

Thus the strength of the Catholic school lies not in its adaptation to fashionable trends in the society, but precisely in its being different.

The desire to maintain a measure of religious and cultural distinctiveness appears to be a growing consideration for immigrant parents as well. The Dutch authorities had not encouraged the use of the freedom of school choice for the operation of schools by ethnic and linguistic minority groups, basing this upon the principle that society should be so arranged that minority group members had not only equal rights and duties but also real access to all institutions, and the judgment that such access would best be furthered by discouraging "categorical" provisions for ethnic groups. While recognizing that each group had a right "to live and give shape to their own identity," the government insisted that "in general there is no difference between minorities and the rest of the population" (*Regeringsnota over het minderhedenbeleid* 1983). An earlier draft of the government policy had warned that "if minorities mostly or exclusively call on values and/or interests that differ from those of the host society and set themselves apart from this society, that will lead to isolation. Members of the group can then be held back from actually orienting themselves to the surrounding society, at the cost of their chances within the society." (*Ontwerp-Minderhedennota* 1981)

Over the past year or two the dam seems to have broken, however, and despite the misgivings of local education authorities several new ethnic schools have been founded. In 1987 a flurry of stories appeared in the press about requests for public funding of Moslem schools in Rotterdam and Eindhoven, a Hindu school in The Hague, and also an additional Jewish school in Rotterdam. At first it was unclear whether the proposals were primarily ethnic or religious: for example, would an Islamic school really be a Turkish or a Moroccan school? (*Samenwijs*, October 1987). In a discussion of the pros and cons of Islamic and Hindu schools arranged by the journal *Samenwijs*, the Protestant and Catholic participants—with their tradition of denominational schooling—insisted upon the right of immigrant parents to decide for themselves whether such schools would be in the interest of their children, while representatives of progressive ethnic organizations argued against separate schools! (*Samenwijs*, November 1987).

Although no one questions the *right* of Hindu and Moslem groups to set up schools and—if enough parents select these schools—to receive full public funding, local authorities have not been eager to give their approval. A Hindu group in The Hague experienced many delays in obtaining approval, while the education officials of the Eindhoven and Rotterdam governments expressed their regret over the necessity of allowing Islamic schools (*Samenwijs*, May 1988, January 1989).

The resistance reflects in large part the opposition of many Labor Party leaders—in control of the government of most cities, where immigrants are concentrated—to nonpublic schooling in general, and to the teaching of religion within the framework of formal schooling. Moslems complain that their long-standing requests for Islamic instruction within public schools have been ignored, or trivialized with a comparative religion approach that stresses festivals but not beliefs. As the chairman of the Hindu Education Foundation pointed out, in another discussion, "You don't bring a Hindu child up as a Hindu by organizing a Hindu festival or an exotic day. Our philosophy of life does not find a place in the public school. . . . We don't want the superficial alone, and that's why we want a Hindu school" (*Samenwijs* May 1988).

Another frequent objection is that such schools will lead to isolation. Advocates insist that this is hypocrisy. A Moslem leader pointed out that no such concerns are raised about "international schools" serving the children of the elite, "but as soon as is a matter of setting up an Islamic or a Hindu school there's a lot of concern. Besides, there's no difference between the [public] inner-city schools and our school. In those schools the foreign children are separate" (*Samenwijs* May 1988).

And the Hindu leader noted that "in The Hague there is a Catholic school with 70 to 80 percent Hindu children. All the Hindu festivals are celebrated. When we say, take the Catholic label off and make it Hindu, we're accused of trying to segregate and polarize" (*Samenwijs*, May 1988).

Despite the resistance of authorities, an Islamic school was able to get off the ground with a hundred pupils in late 1988. The leaders insist that it is "a Dutch elementary school on an Islamic basis," and note that all five teachers are Dutch, supplemented by a Moroccan and a Turkish teacher to provide supplemental language and culture lessons. The lesson plan is that of other Dutch schools, except that the required periods of religious (or humanistic) instruction are devoted to Islam. Dutch is the language of instruction except for the periods of religion and of supplemental language and culture classes. The Moroccan chairman of the school's trustees points out that non-Moslem pupils are welcome and would be treated with the same respect that Moslem pupils have experienced in Catholic and Protestant schools; apparently no irony is intended.

Interestingly enough, it was the Protestant School Association which provided the necessary guarantees so that this Islamic school could get started, and the organizers have made no contact with the embassies of Morocco or of Turkey. The Moslem community is clearly making use of the existing structures for denominational organization within Dutch society, rather than operating as an outpost of the homeland; in this they contrast with Japanese groups in Britain.

A study of the local debates over approving public funding for Islamic and Hindu schools notes that no concerns are expressed when a new Catholic or Protestant school is proposed. "Private Christian schools are a familiar phenomenon, and everyone assumes without thinking twice about it that the parents want to provide education for their children out of their own religious background." (Shadid and Van Koningsveld 1989, 155)

Much of the opposition from the Left is connected with general opposition to private schooling, while Christian Democrats point out that organizing denominational schools is a proven means, in Dutch life, for groups to achieve "emancipation" through community development—and to draw parents more closely into the education of their children. Opponents express concern that separate schools will increase intolerance and social division, while supporters point out that this has not been the result of Protestant and Catholic schools, and that the increasing segregation in Dutch education reveals how little effect efforts to promote tolerance have had. One city councillor in Eindhoven insisted that "We shouldn't be asking whether [founding an Islamic school] is good for those affected; they should determine that for themselves." Despite such arguments, the study concludes, the strongly paternalistic flavor of the discussion suggests that Islamic and Hindu parents would have little chance of obtaining support for their schools if they had to rely upon political persuasion rather than their constitutional rights (Shadid and Van Koningsveld 1989, 170).

On the basis of these rights, Islamic schools opened in August 1988 in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, while others were planned to open in 1989 in Haarlem and Oss. Similar efforts are under way in Utrecht, Den Bosch, Leiden, Gorcum and Amelo (*Samenwijs*, February, April 1989).

It is notable that these schools are in no case based upon the linguistic and cognitive arguments advanced for separate development of linguistic minority pupils in the United States. The Dutch schools organized by linguistic minority groups do not instruct pupils primarily in their home language, nor seek to shelter them from the *language* of the host society. (Indeed, Dutch law would permit linguistically separate schools only under an article of the education laws that applies to schools for pupils of foreign nationality, such as the children of diplomats and businessmen.) The concern of the Islamic and Hindu schools is rather with the *values* of Dutch society and thus of Dutch schools, and they seek to provide an alternative schooling more consistent with the beliefs of immigrant parents, while equipping pupils to participate fully in the Dutch economy.

The Hindu self-help organization in The Hague found that the generation gap between immigrants and their children had been growing greater over the past decade. "Hindu youth are imitating Dutch youth in vandalism, use of alcohol and drugs, and smoking. In Surinamese circles those are tabu. . . . Here in the Netherlands the children develop other values than their parents. Often they are uncertain and incapable of expressing in words what it means to be Hindu." And a Moslem leader insists that "With Islam there is no vandalism, no theft and no use of hashish. If someone doesn't know his own culture well, he can't understand other cultures. No one can stand on the air!" (*Samenwijs*, May 1988).

However idealized the picture offered of the old ways—after all, "hashish" is an Arabic word!—these communities clearly are seeking to reinforce their ability to socialize their children in values with which they are comfortable, to protect and isolate them in some respects from the acids of modernity. The call for Hindu and Islamic schools is not related to ethnic nationalism or to a "myth of return," but to the universal desire of parents to have a major say in the raising of their children.

Does this continuing support for schooling based upon a distinctive position on values and world view mean that the "new school struggle" is no more than a flash in a pan? Not at all. The issues raised in the past few years, issues of the erosion of school identity, issues of the assimilation of new ethnic minorities into Dutch life, issues of social justice and common purpose, of tolerance and conviction, will not go away. They are being debated within the education community and beyond with a degree of explicitness that may be unparalleled elsewhere in the world.

In the process, a quality of engagement with questions of the basic purposes of education puts the Netherlands in some ways ahead of societies in which policy debates are limited to the efficiency and effectiveness of schools.

The autonomy of the Dutch elementary school—with respect to curriculum, pedagogy and hiring staff, though not to budget, schedule or firing staff—may not be as great as that of the private school in the United States, but it is considerably greater than that of most American public schools. Not every Dutch school uses its autonomy to good effect, but the opportunity is there and many Dutch schools, particularly at the elementary level, continue to justify Georges Cuvier's comment in 1811 and Matthew Arnold's in 1861, that they are the best in the world.

Certainly the opportunity for parents to make educational choices is more elaborately protected in the Netherlands than anywhere else. Not every parent makes wise choices, of course, and many simply select the nearest school, but the research on the process of choice suggests a balancing of considerations that cannot fail to encourage subsequent involvement in the educational process.

American economist Estelle James gives a balanced view of the "pre-conditions, costs and benefits of privatized public services" in the Netherlands. Her

> discussions with Dutch parents and educators indicate that the preference for private schools stems from the belief that they are more personal and responsive to parental wishes, that they spend their funds more effectively and use their fees to secure better facilities. Also, private schools, in effect, label their ideology ahead of time, so parents know what they will be getting, in contrast to public schools which ostensibly have no ideology, except that which the individual teacher adopts. (James 1982, 18–19)

James also notes that among Dutch schools "choice exists with respect to the philosophy of education but only slightly with respect to funding or quality components which are dependent on funding" (1982, 42). This uniformity in funding is a powerful guarantor of equity while at the same time it encourages schools to compete on the basis of what they do with their resources rather than of their success in obtaining them.

A final personal impression from visits to Dutch schools and discussions with a wide range of policymakers is that the Dutch have scarcely begun to appreciate the power of choice for school improvement. The constitutional guarantees of educational freedom have been understood as a defense against encroachment by the State rather than as a framework for true diversity and school-level decision making. There appears to be a good deal of truth in the critique expressed in the Labor Party's recent discussion paper, that Dutch education is dominated by large cartels in restraint of competition and thus of improvements in school quality.

The answer, surely, is not to restrict choice and diversity, but to open the system up through continued efforts—such as those made by the Union: School and Gospel—to profile the identity of individual schools more sharply, and through greatly improved parent information efforts as a basis for sound choices. Encouraging signs suggest that the necessary discussions are well under way in hundreds of schools and parent councils. In this respect, and in the care with which freedom and fairness are administratively protected, American educational reform can learn a great deal from the Dutch experience.

Belgium

Parental Choice in Belgian Education

The extreme diversity of Belgian education and the choices that it offers and, equally significantly, does not offer, reflect a history in which national unity has frequently been troubled by differences of language and religion.

Belgian policy has come to accommodate choice on the basis of religion while regarding choice on the basis of language as threatening to communal solidarity. This policy contrasts with the United States, where a certain amount of language diversity is promoted with public funds, but the common school is expected to be loftily unaware of religion.

The Belgian Constitution, as amended in 1970, guarantees "the rights and freedom of ideological and philosophical minorities." These rights and this freedom have been carefully protected; the very structure of Belgian education assures, at considerable cost, that parents will be able to decide at least whether they want a Catholic or a secular school, while in larger cities other choices exist as well. The desire of many parents for religiously based schooling, a cause of bitter political conflict at several points in Belgian history, has been accommodated successfully.

The educational system also provides for—indeed, requires—a sort of linguistic pluralism, but in this case the tensions between French-speaking and Dutch-speaking Belgians have led to this being defined as a group right rather than an individual right. Each of the two language groups has a right to a full educational program, pre-school through university, in its own language in its own parts of the country, but only in the Brussels area do individual parents have a right to choose a French-language or a Dutch-language school. This territorially based language monopoly has prevented an effective response to the presence of minority groups that differ not only in belief but also in language and culture from the two language groups that divide political power (Rigaux 1980, 68).

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The controversies in Belgian education for the first 130 years after independence was won in 1830 were primarily over religion and the freedom to operate and to choose a confessional school. The nature of the argument for educational freedom changed significantly over this period, from an emphasis on the right and responsibility of the Catholic Church to educate, "for the soul of the child," to an emphasis on the right of parents of any confession or none at all to choose a school for their children.

Over the past 25 years, the issue of religious schooling has caused somewhat less heat, in part because, for many Belgians, it has come to seem less problematical than the relation of schooling to the nation's language divisions and to social class. These controversies, in turn, have blocked a full discussion of the issues raised by the presence of guest-workers-turned-immigrants.

Religion

Nineteenth-Century Background

Belgium as an independent nation dates only from 1830, and concern about "educational freedom" was both a cause and a consequence of its independence. A brief historical sketch is necessary to explain the enduring—though changing—Belgian commitment to parent choice of schools.

The area that is now Belgium is made up of the southern provinces of the Low Countries (in Dutch, "Nederlanden") that remained under Spanish—and then Austrian—rule after the northern provinces won their independence in 1648 after decades of warfare. More than half of the 10 million Belgians speak Dutch, and most of the remainder French, with a German-speaking minority as well. Nominally almost all Belgians are Roman Catholic, but those in French-speaking areas are less likely to be practicing Catholics.

The armies of the new French Republic overthrew Austrian authority in the early 1790s; in 1796 the southern provinces of the Low Countries were absorbed into France as nine departements and they were subject to Napoleon until his final defeat, on Belgian soil, at Waterloo. The victorious allies decided upon a unification of the southern and northern Low Countries, the area now making up Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg, as the Kingdom of the United Netherlands. This creation endured only from 1815 to 1830, when the southern provinces rose in rebellion and became the independent nation Belgium.

An unusual feature of the period of nation-forming in Belgium is the alliance between Catholic leadership and the mildly anticlerical Liberals. These groups shared a distrust of several policies of King William I, including his attempts to implement the more advanced Dutch model of elementary education in the southern provinces. While such elementary schools provided Catholic religious instruction, their connection with a government perceived to be dominated by Protestants aroused suspicion.

Catholics were even more offended by a decision of the national government, in 1825, to close the secondary-level boarding schools operated by the Church, ostensibly to train future priests but in fact providing a general education to many other boys as well. While the bishops could continue to operate clergy training seminaries, only schools with explicit government authorization would be permitted to provide a secular education (Vroede 1983, 132). These measures of "cultural policy" in a broad sense brought the strongly Catholic Dutch-speaking provinces of what would become Belgium into alliance with the French-speaking provinces against the rule of William I.

With this background, it was natural that among the first acts of the new provisional government was to remove all barriers to freedom of education and that the Constitution adopted in 1831 guaranteed the right to establish and maintain schools. Another right dear to Liberals as well as Catholics, that of free association, made it possible for religious teaching orders to begin to build a massive network of Catholic schools.

These constitutional provisions reflected the concern of Catholic leaders to prevent the State from gaining a monopoly control over the instrument by which the rising generation would be shaped. They were not satisfied with government-controlled schools that offered Catholic instruction; the Church must be free to operate its own schools and to support them through tuitions and through funding arrangements with municipal authorities. And so "the Catholic Church . . . obtained a rare combination of material support and freedom from state control" (Lorwin 1966, 150).

The School Law adopted in 1842 required that each community maintain at least one primary school, and provide free instruction for poor children. This obligation could be met through supporting an existing Catholic school (Clerck 1974, 16; Mallinson 1963, 46).

As in contemporary France, the dominant Liberals, though anticlerical in conviction, saw the clergy as valuable allies in ensuring social peace and penetrating village life with selected elements of progress. Thus little conflict occurred over elementary education. As a result of the strong Catholic influence on municipal schools—which had official diocesan as well as government inspectors—the share of private elementary schools declined from 44 percent in 1840 to 16 percent in 1878 (Vroede 1983, 143; Billiet 1977a, 13).

Within a few years, however, Liberals were expressing the concern that, through the official involvement of the clergy in public schools, the Catholic Church would have an undue influence on the beliefs and loyalties of the people. Liberals began to insist that the State provide an alternative to Catholic schooling, in the name of the very liberty that Catholic leaders claimed. Mutual suspicion grew through controversies over the Masonic lodges through which freethinkers organized to oppose the claims of the Church. As a result of Liberal efforts, a new school law was enacted in 1850, substituting for collaboration between Church and State a clear separation under which each was free to maintain its own system (Mallinson 1963, 63; Art 1977).

Catholics, on their part, insisted that instruction could not be separated from the formation of the whole person, and that this must be either religious or antireligious; with a full enough development of Catholic education, State-operated schools would be unnecessary (Clerck 1974, 22, 35). In a compromise reached in 1854, the Church agreed to give up its claims to influence the appointment of teachers in State schools in exchange for a commitment that two hours a week in the latter would be devoted to Catholic religious instruction, and that no objectionable books would be used in State schools.

Growing Liberal self-confidence led to abandonment of such compromises; they were seen as a threat "to the diffusion of Liberal notions among future generations of Belgian voters" (Lorwin 1966, 153). State-controlled schooling was seen as the primary instrument of popular enlightenment. As one historian observed, "the aggressiveness of liberalism and its attempt to win over the masses in the 1870s are the themes which dominate Belgian and Dutch history during the [period]" (Kossmann 1978, 208; Witte 1977).

At the height of Liberal ascendancy, in 1879, the government insisted that all education receiving public support should be exclusively under the control of the State; "they drove the Catholics out of the public schools" (Kossmann 1978, 242). Legislation was adopted removing all subsidies for Catholic schools and requiring municipalities to establish their own schools instead. Religious instruction had to be replaced by moral teaching.

This program reflected a growing belief among Liberals, in Belgium as in France, the United States, and other nations at this period, that Catholic teaching was irreconcilable with freedom and progress and with the development of future citizens. Extending the effective authority of the State was seen as a necessary form of self-protection as well as a guarantor of the rights of individuals against the power of the clergy and their followers (Clerck 1974, 50-55; Mallinson 1963, 84–86; Billiet 1977a, 15; Wils 1977, 288).

Acts of what was perceived as Liberal aggression against the right of parents to see their children schooled in their own faith had the effect—as in other countries at this time—of mobilizing massive Catholic resistance and stimulating the development of a parallel school system. "From schools without God and from teachers without faith, deliver us, O Lord!" prayed the celebrant at many masses, not without effect. Within a few months 30 percent of the pupils and 20 percent of the teachers in Belgium had left public schools for newly formed "free" Catholic schools.

By 1879, 379,000 pupils attended Catholic schools but only 240,000 attended public schools. The proportion of enrollment in Catholic elementary schools rose from 13 percent in 1878 to 61 percent (more than 75 percent in Flanders) in 1880. There were 168 public schools without any students at all. The issue became cast as one of personal liberty against the arrogance of an elite, with charges by supporters of Catholic education that "the very people who were posing as apostles of enlightenment were seeking nothing less than the enslavement of the rest of the population" (Mallinson 1963, 97; Billiet 1977b, 52).

The struggle over schooling had the secondary effect, as in the Netherlands, of mobilizing Catholics to create a wide range of institutions and forms of social and political expression. In 1884 the Catholic party was able to win a decisive majority in the national legislature, and the Liberals would never again gain control of the government. The education law adopted that year returned control of schools to the municipalities, leaving them free to adopt or subsidize local Catholic schools (Kossmann 1978, 367).

The system of nongovernmental or free education in Belgium, then, developed as a reaction against the efforts of an elite to use schooling as a means of popular "enlightenment," seen as the only guarantor of progress in the face of the reactionary power of the Church. This elite, working through the State system, sought unsuccessfully to remove religion from the central role that many parents wanted it to play in the education of their children. When, in the 1850s, they built new schools where none had existed before, Kossmann observes, the Liberals enjoyed popular support, but no such support existed for their subsequent efforts to drive the Church out of education (Kossman 1978, 242).

The subsequent history of Belgium was marked by conflict between the secular and religious agendas for education, conflict that lasted until the "school pact" concluded in 1958–59. One account of Belgian political life notes that "The Dreyfus case in France and the Ulster issue in England perhaps cut more deeply and polarized opinion more sharply. But both were shorter-lived, and neither involved so many people's daily lives for so long a period as did the church-school issue in Belgium." (Lorwin 1966, 154)

At stake was not just whether religious teaching would be provided—since that was an aspect of public schooling as well—but whether the State would be, as the Liberals insisted, absolute master in its own house. The State, in Liberal thinking, was the ultimate guarantor of the rights of individuals. Catholics, like their Catholic and Calvinist contemporaries in the Netherlands, insisted that the role of the State must be limited and could in no way transgress on what they considered the God-given sphere of authority of the family or the Church.

Debates over government subsidies to private schools (as distinct from Catholic schools "adopted" by municipalities) began in the 1890s. The supporters pointed out that many parents had more confidence in private than in public schools, and that they were forced to pay taxes for schools to which they would not send their children. Despite predictions from opponents that competition for students would undermine public education and divide society, direct tax support for private schools was voted in 1895. In 1914 public and approved private elementary education was made completely tuition-free (Clerck 1974, 68–70, 97).

The Postwar Period

The compromises permitting parents to choose between private (generally Catholic) and public schools were threatened when, in 1954, the Socialists made strong gains in the parliamentary elections and were able to form a government with the Liberals, a party based largely in the unchurched middle class. Although education had not been a major issue in the election campaign, the common anticlericalism of the two parties was one of the few areas where they could agree (Billiet 1977a, 22).

The education policy of the new government included expansion and improvement of schooling directly operated by the national government, together with stricter controls and reduced subsidies for private schools. National authorities had the authority, they insisted, to intervene directly to create neutral public schools wherever the right of non-Catholic parents to such an education justified such schools. Local and provincial authorities should no longer be allowed to meet their obligations by subsidizing Catholic schools. While the coalition partners denied they wanted to limit the freedom of parents, they objected to subsidizing "intolerant confessional schooling, at the service of a militant Church and a political party" (Billiet 1977a, 26; Witte and Meynen 1982, 223).

Catholics responded by forming the National Committee for Freedom and Democracy and conducting protest demonstrations; a petition drive collected more than 2 million signatures. The emphasis now was more on the rights of parents than on those of the Church. All parents, Catholics insisted, should have the right to choose where to send their children for schooling. Their slogans were: "All Belgian children are equal before the law," "no second-class citizens," "equal opportunities for all," and "freedom and equality for all parents." In other words, supporters of private education cast the issues in terms of fundamental justice to parents and children.

The election campaign of 1958 was largely dominated by the school question, with Liberals stressing the right of the State to organize and control education, and Socialists the need to expand government-sponsored schooling in order to ensure that parents would be able to choose a nonreligious school. The election produced strong gains for the predominantly Catholic Christian People's Party. The stage was set for agreement by all three major parties to the 12-year "school pact," the framework for subsequent educational policy (Clerck 1974, 140–52; Witte and Meynen 1982, 227).

The new school law adopted unanimously—with the exception of the Communists—in 1959 protected the freedom of parent choice at all levels below the universities. This freedom would be made effectual by a commitment that resources for education would be distributed on the basis of the free play of religious and other preferences of parents, as expressed in their choices of schools. Conflict between public and private education over school budgets would end, at least in theory, since each school would receive the share of funds available to which its enrollment entitled it (Billiet 1977a, 27–33).

The government, by this compromise, was entitled to establish as many schools as were needed to ensure that the right to a neutral education was protected "in all parts of the country." Students not near a confessional or a neutral school would receive free transportation to one within a reasonable distance.

The compromise reached in 1958 did not require that any of the parties abandon their basic principles; in a sense, it was an agreement on how they would live together while retaining their convictions about the desirable role and form of education.

To implement this agreement, 376 new government schools were established between 1958 and 1965, while 465 private schools (almost all Catholic) were brought within the subsidy arrangements. The proportion of elementary school enrollment in national government-operated schools increased from 8.7 percent in 1958–59 to 16.4 percent in 1972–73. This increase, it should be noted, was not at the expense of private schools, whose enrollment remained between 51 and 52 percent of the total, but of municipal schools. In the upper level of secondary education, the enrollment share of private schools actually increased during this period, from 61.2 percent to 63.7 percent (Billiet 1977a, 43–45).

Present Arrangements

Education in Belgium may now be organized—with tax support—by a variety of sponsors. Three "networks" exist: some schools are directly controlled by the central government, others by provincial or local authorities, others by individuals and associations. Education is further differentiated by language, with completely separate structures for Dutch (Flemish) education on the one hand and for French and (a small minority) German education on the other. The language separation is so complete that the two national ministries of education even maintain separate bookstores in Brussels across the street from one another!

The "free" schools not under the direct control of national, provincial, or local authorities are nearly all Catholic; they serve somewhat fewer than half the students in the French- and German-speaking areas, but two-thirds of those in the Dutch-speaking areas (table 3).

The education law adopted in 1959 requires schools controlled by the national government to provide a "neutral" education respecting the religious or philosophical opinions of all parents who might send their children; three-quarters of the teachers in such schools must have diplomas from a nonreligious training institution. The schools have been required since 1948 to provide at least 2 hours a week of religious instruction (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, or Jewish, by choice) as well as a nonconfessional, essentially humanistic course in ethics (Baert 1984).

Table 3.—Percentage of students enrolled in private schools, by language area: Belgium, school year 1984–85

Type of school	French/German	Dutch
Nursery	39.7	70.5
Primary	42.0	63.6
Secondary	49.8	71.0

SOURCE: Data based on Ministere de l'Education nationale statistics, 1986.

Private schools as well as provincial and locally controlled schools are, under the same law, subsidized by the national government, provided that they conform to program requirements and agree to inspection by the Ministry of Education. This inspection is confined to the subjects taught and the language used (a matter of perpetual jealousy in Belgium), and may not deal with pedagogical methods or the religious and philosophical basis of the instruction.

As if this system were not complex enough already, secondary education has been further divided between those schools that have adopted a structural reform intended to create comprehensive education and those that have not. This division is naturally relevant to the theme of school choice, but it is also an aspect of the exercise of "freedom" by the many Catholic schools that have chosen, with the support of parents, to refuse to adopt the comprehensive structure.

So-called Type I schools (often called "renewed") are structured in three stages of two years each; the first stage, known as the "observation" period, is largely common for all students, and includes ongoing assessment of each student by a multidisciplinary team. During the second ("orientation") stage students specialize more, essentially in what American high schools would call tracks, though at the end of this period it is possible to take a third "reorientation" year and change to a different program. Various certificates are awarded at the end of the third ("determination") stage.

The more traditional form of secondary education, known now as Type II, is organized in two stages of three years each with a clear separation from the start between academically oriented and vocationally oriented schools. Students in the academic schools are further divided according to the difficulty of their courses: seven program options are offered at the start of the second stage, ranging from Latin and Greek at the most difficult to Human Sciences at the least difficult. In short, the Type II schools incorporate the principle of selection, while the Type I schools avoid it so long as possible (Ministere de l'Education nationale 1986; Fletcher 1985).

The "Type I" model, mandated for nationally controlled schools since 1971, has been widely adopted by private schools in the French-speaking Walloon provinces, but resisted by their counterparts in the Dutch-speaking Flemish provinces. Despite research claims that assert the advantages of "student-oriented" comprehensive schools over "content-oriented" traditional secondary schools (Brutsaert 1986; Vandenberghe 1985), many parents and school heads continue to insist upon the benefits of the latter.

The controversy drew toward a crisis with the insistence of the government that all secondary schools receiving tax support adopt the comprehensive structure by September 1988.

On October 11, 1987, for example, there was a mass meeting in Antwerp of parents supporting the "traditional" secondary education provided in many Catholic schools. Angered over what they charged was insufficient firmness against government restructuring requirements on the part of Catholic school authorities, the parents threatened to set up a separate organization with technical assistance centers to protect the quality of traditional education, and to withhold their dues from the National (Catholic) Federation of Parent Organizations because of its endorsement of the unitary model of secondary schooling.

A parent leader at this rally charged that the Type I unitary model was based upon a concept of education in conflict with the Western tradition based upon the Gospel. The purpose of education, she said, was not to meet social needs but to ennoble and cultivate mankind (*De Standaard*, October 12).

Religion as a Motivation for School Choice

Research carried out by J. Billiet in Flanders in the mid-1970s found that, as might be expected, the social class of parents had a substantial impact on the secondary school program that students ended up in. Class did not, however, affect whether students attended Catholic or public schools sponsored by national or municipal government. In other words, the maintenance of a Catholic educational network was not an instrument of social class maintenance.

The fact that, as in surveys conducted in the Netherlands, parents tended to give reasons for selection of a school related to its program or practical factors should not be taken to indicate, Billiet concluded, that its religious identity was not important; it tended simply to be taken for granted in the choice process. Students ended up in Catholic schools because they and their families were rooted in a social milieu—not just relationships, but also values, norms, convictions, habits, ways of seeing the world—where such a decision was almost automatic. The chance that children from Catholic families would end up in a Catholic school was 50 percent if their parents were not integrated into a Catholic milieu, but 97 percent if they were. Free-thinking Liberals displayed an equally distinctive cultural pattern, and their children were very likely to end up in high-status public schools (Billiet 1977a, 205–7).

Mothers with children in Catholic schools were more likely to speak standard Dutch (rather than dialect), to live in freestanding houses, to have more children and also to want more children.

Mothers with children in public schools, by contrast, were more tolerant on sexual morality and abortion. "The climate that prevails in the two educational networks," Billiet concluded, "is clearly more than simply religious." Quite apart from social class, differences in lifestyle and in moral convictions and behavior distinguished those who chose Catholic schools from those who chose public schools (Billiet 1977a, 203–4).

Given this pattern, the question arises whether the growing secularization of Belgian society will spell the decline of Catholic "free" schools. Billiet's research suggests that it will not. Among parents who did not attend church but were rooted in a Catholic milieu (as described above), three out of four sent their children to a Catholic school. Whether these schools have themselves undergone a certain secularization is a question raised but not answered by Billiet, but he suggests that the Catholic milieu—including its schools—might be coming to take the place of the Church for many secularized Belgians. After all, "a change in religious convictions and practices is not necessarily accompanied, on the structural level, by the abandonment of networks of social relationships, and in addition there can be a development, on the cultural level, of a sort of surrogate for churchliness" (Billiet 1977a, 209).

Proposals for a Common School

During the early 1970s, in a strange episode in seeming conflict with their position supporting the present system, all three Belgian political parties incorporated into their programs and eventually enacted into law the idea of a common school. Though this new program—which by implication would replace all of the present arrangements, both public and private—has not been implemented in an effective way, it will provide an appropriate opportunity to summarize the issues raised by freedom of education in Belgium.

The demand for a basic reform of the agreement reached in 1958, and indeed of the system that had evolved over the previous century, did not emerge from the population in general. A survey conducted in 1970 found, for example, that 77 percent of Belgian adults supported the maintenance of a system of Catholic education (Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 53).

Among young intellectuals and political activists, however, the idea emerged that the structural separation (verzuiling) of education along religious and secular lines reflected the concerns of an earlier time and no longer corresponded to the real issues and problems of Belgian society. They called for "pluralistic community schools," schools that would make no pretense of being neutral but would provide a setting for students to be exposed to values rooted in human experience and in the struggle for justice rather than in traditional religious doctrine.

Credit for introducing this idea into political debate is usually given to a 1960 article by R. Merecy in a left-wing Catholic monthly. Merecy called for a school "in which youth of diverse social backgrounds, coming from distinctive political milieus and from backgrounds with differing world views, will end up together. The pedagogy of such a school rests more on its attitude than on its content. This attitude can no longer be a neutral or contradicting one, nor [merely] tolerant nor passive; it must be actively expressed, based upon respect" (quoted in Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 88).

The advocates of this new common school saw it as "socially renewing," as a way of forming a new society; they spoke of it as an *engaged* school, in the existentialist sense, with no pretext of neutrality with respect to the issues of social and political life. Parents, teachers, students, and community activists would all be involved in shaping its mission and life. How it could come into being was less clear, given the principle of freedom of choice. Some hope was expressed that several existing schools—public and Catholic—might decide to fuse into a single "pluralistic school." This would be consistent with the intention to bring various world views into confrontation, and thus to help students to form their own insights and values (Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 99, 165).

The response of supporters of Catholic education was to stress that private schools (known in Belgium as "free" schools) were an expression of the concerns of a significant group within Belgian life, and that their popularity with parents (whether Catholic or not) was the best evidence that they met a real need. "So long as parents, through 'freedom of choice,' entrusted their children to Catholic schools, the common school, even a pluralistic one, was not acceptable. . . . The supporters of pluralistic education on their part considered the 'principle of free choice' (for various reasons) as no longer relevant . . . and repeatedly raised questions about the real significance of the choices made by parents" (Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 166).

While surveys seemed to show that parents chose for a number of reasons, and not primarily because of the religious identity of the school. Catholic school advocates countered that the reasons for parent choice of private schools could not be determined by survey re[illegible]h, since they lay "deeper than a superficial sociological study can uncover"; indeed it was claimed that many parents wanted the schools to place more stress on Christian identity. Private schools were not only popular but financially efficient, and it was in the interest of the general welfare to support them adequately in their educational mission (Billiet 1977a, 71).

Pedagogical arguments were advanced as well. In a world in which youth are exposed to the confused and cynical values presented by the media, it was all the more important to provide education rooted in a coherent viewpoint. The issue was not religious instruction alone, the supporters of private schools argued, but a coherent school climate in which the student's personality could be formed through the witness of the teachers, through relationships, and through the religious observances of the entire school (Billiet 1977a, 72-73).

The national parliament adopted a number of measures, in the early 1970s, to renew and update the compromises reached in 1958. One of these was the approval, in 1975, of a law authorizing the creation of "pluralistic schools." This symbolic step, however, seemed to exhaust the reform impulse, since little has been done to implement it.

The significance of this action, taken under pressure from a number of groups outside of the normal education policy process, was limited by the fact that, 2 years earlier, the legislators had approved financial and organizational measures that strengthened the existing public and Catholic systems. While diversity and democracy might flourish within a common school, the legislators conceded by their actions that the actual pluralism of Belgian society was effectively served by a diversity among schools, and that the voters wanted this system to be maintained.

As one commentator suggested in the title of his account of the 1975 legislation, the pluralistic common school was a stillborn child. The most difficult question was left unresolved by the legislation: would the presence of a pluralistic school in a community satisfy the right of parents to a confessional or to a neutral school? Would a parent lose the right to free transportation to and enrollment in a Catholic school, for example, if a pluralistic school was close by? These issues were troubling to many, and Catholic education authorities urged schools not to agree to become part of pluralistic combinations with secular schools (Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 221–22).

The debates over the pluralistic school in Belgium represent, in a sense, a late expression of the program of social reconciliation through the common school advanced by Horace Mann and others in the United States and their contemporaries in Europe.

The pedagogical vision expressed by supporters of the pluralistic school is a generous and attractive one. It may, however, be an idea whose time has come and gone again. Current thinking about educational effectiveness in Belgium, as in the United States, has rediscovered the importance of a school's coherence, the single vision that gives order and meaning to every aspect of a school's life. Parents seem to have an instinct that they are more likely to find such coherence, and thus a healthy environment for the development of their children, in a school that is not seeking to respond to every whim and fashion that is abroad in the land.

A Commitment to Religious Pluralism

The principle of freedom of choice of schools, supported by all major political parties in Belgium, is a major accommodation for each of them.

For the Christian Democrats, the principle represents an implicit concession of the equal validity of various forms of education, even for Catholic parents. The old objective of a common State school providing Catholic teaching under the oversight of the local clergy was surrendered a century ago. In exchange, Catholics have gained significant space in national life to offer a distinctively religious schooling for those who want it. The Christian Democrats have taken care to present themselves as the defenders of the rights of parents of all religious beliefs or none, not of the Catholic hierarchy, under the slogan "free choice plus equal opportunities equal democratic education." As the party argued in a 1965 publication entitled "Why Catholic Education?":

> (a) Catholic education must be able to exist because it is desired for their children by very many parents; (b) tolerance does not in any way mean not having any convictions or lacking the desire to share those convictions; (c) openness and the exchange of ideas require in the first place actually having ideas, and these must somehow be formed and deepened; (d) the proposal for "engaged" education grows out of nihilism and ignores the rights of parents; (e) if "neutral" [public] education is really going to be neutral, it must include teachers who have been trained in a Christian world view. (quoted in Billiet 1977a, 75–76)

Through continual political action the supporters of "free" private schools have ensured that they are treated equally with respect to government funding, without significant interference in their internal affairs.

For the Liberals, freedom of choice also represents an abandonment of the ambition to educate all children in a common school, according to their own definition of the values and loyalties that all should hold. During the 19th century they had called for schools under the exclusive control of civil authorities and able to compete successfully with private schools, and had seen this program as the cornerstone of the secular State.

As they have come increasingly to take a conservative position in ecomomic affairs, it has not been too difficult for the Liberals to abandon their anticlericalism and to embrace the free enterprise and competition implicit in the present system of education. The 1958 election taught the party leaders that carrying on the ideological struggle over schooling did not pay off politically (Ceulaer and Vroede 1980, 75).

For the Socialists, finally, freedom of choice has been swallowed only with difficulty. Heirs of the statist tradition that the Liberals have gradually abandoned, the Socialists make no secret of their ultimate preference for a unitary common school. As Arnould Clausse wrote in *Une doctrine socialiste de l'education* (1955), from a Socialist perspective only one (type of) school should exist; only the State has a right to provide education in that it is the guarantor of the interests of the entire national community. It is the responsibility of the State, through its schools, to protect children from the "spiritual narrowness" of their parents.

What the Socialists have gained through the 1958 compromise is the opportunity to expand the State's role in education vigorously, especially at the elementary level, and thus to become better positioned for a possible State monopoly of schooling at some time in the future. At the same time they have noted their opponents' effective use of the slogan "freedom of choice," and have incorporated it into their own position.

Language

The political choice made in Belgium to provide official support for parent choice on the basis of the religious identity of schools is similar to those made in other Western democracies, with the exception of the United States. Belgium's religious differences have been accommodated through compromise. Belgium has found it far more difficult to come to terms with its language differences, however, and has left little scope for individual parent choice. The policies currently in effect are less an accommodation than a stand-off between the two primary language communities.

Flemings and Walloons

The territory now included within Belgium has been divided linguistically along substantially the present lines since the late Roman period, with Walloon dialects of French spoken in the southern provinces (Wallonia) and Flemish dialects of Dutch spoken in the northern provinces (known collectively as Flanders). In both sections, however, French was long the preferred, if not the only, language of the educated elite, and thus the medium of administration and of high culture. This pattern intensified during the two decades (1795–1815) of hegemony by France, when the authorities in Paris sought to assimilate the Belgian people by promoting republican values and French nationalism. The cultural influence that had already given French a privileged position in the Dutch-speaking Flemish provinces was reinforced by official action, including changing of street names, exclusive use of French in legal proceedings, and even a ban on printing anything in Dutch. All secondary education was provided in French. Only in the Catholic Church in Flanders did Dutch remain in public use (Roegiers 1983, 72–73; Kossmann 1978, 80).

One of the most important reforms instituted during the brief period of union with the Netherlands (1815–30) was a substantial expansion of the official use of Dutch, as part of a cultural policy concerned with creating national unity. In Flanders, primary education in Dutch was greatly expanded, and the use of Dutch in secondary schools was gradually extended starting in 1823, while it was offered as an optional subject in schools in Wallonia (Vroede 1983, 128, 132; Kossmann 1978, 124).

With the independence of Belgium, the French-speaking elite restored the primacy of French even in Flanders. Educational freedom and the greater diversity of schooling that it brought had the side effect of weakening the position of Dutch in secondary education, since many middle-class Flemish parents preferred schools that would teach their children in the language necessary to worldly success (Vroede 1983, 141).

Until late in the 19th century, the French hegemony in education and public life left the more numerous Flemings in a subordinate position, and equal status for the two languages became the highly sensitive political demand that brought down several national governments in recent years. Flemish resentment of the language inequities in national life ran deep: with French alone, it was said, one could become a government minister, but with Dutch alone one could not even become a corporal (Clerck 1974, 74). "'To be Belgian,' complained Flemish intellectuals, 'we have to cease being Flemish'" (Lorwin 1966, 160).

Only in 1883 were education laws amended to provide for instruction through the Dutch language in the lower grades of secondary education in Dutch-speaking regions, and for teacher training in

Dutch. Full implementation was slow in coming. Language and religious issues became entangled; Socialists charged in 1910, for example, that Jesuit secondary schools in Flanders were competing unfairly with public schools by continuing to teach in French, thus appealing to "the frenchified bourgeoisie, who have an aristocratic disdain for the language of the people" (Clerck 1974, 89).

The important education legislation of 1914 instituted the practice of requiring parents, when registering their child for elementary school, to make a declaration of the family's primary language, so it could be used as the language of instruction. Over the next decades, Flemish nationalists continued to seek measures that would prevent a one-way language shift to French, the more prestigious language; in 1932, they called unsuccessfully for an end to classes in French as a second language in elementary schools.

Legislation adopted that year provided that second language classes could begin in the fifth grade, and in secondary schools should be provided for at least 4 hours a week. Access to jobs in the national civil service was opened to Dutch-speakers, but a proposal that the entire country be organized on a bilingual basis was rejected by Francophones, and the present system of two language zones and a bilingual capital area was put in place.

Brussels, as a bilingual city, had a special requirement: the language of instruction chosen by parents must be that most commonly used by the child, subject to confirmation by a special commission. Second-language instruction was required starting in the third grade for 3 hours a week (Clerck 1974, 97, 115).

Language has come to play an increasingly important part in Belgian political controversy over the past two decades. During the 1960s each of the three major political parties came under the strain of language tension, with the Christian Democrats and the Liberals developing separate Dutch- and French-speaking "wings." The votes won by alternative, language-based political parties increased from 3.5 percent in 1961 to 22.3 percent in 1971, an indication not only of the growing significance of these issues but also of the lessening conflict over religion (Billiet 1977a, 52; Witte and Meynen 1982, 228).

While parental choice of the *religious* character of schooling is protected by political compromises enshrined in law, ongoing conflict over language has led to restrictions on the right of parents to choose the language of instruction, even though it would seem clearly in the interest of the nation that Flemish children become fluent in French and Walloon children in Dutch.

Belgian policy does not regard bilingualism as desirable, since it raises the troubling prospect of intergenerational language shift. The census of 1947 showed significant gains in the use of French in the Brussels area, arousing Flemish resentment. In 1846 the capital city's population had been 67 percent Dutch speaking, but the proportion had declined to 51 percent in 1910 and to 29 percent by 1947; some Flemings described it as a "Frenchifying machine" (Kossmann 1978, 636). Rural migrants from Flanders would adopt French as part of the adaptation to city life, while the gradual spread of French-speaking population into the Dutch-speaking suburbs led to demands that these become officially bilingual; Flemish activists saw these patterns as a "robbery of Flemish soil" (Witte and Meynen 1982, 250).

While French seemed to be taking over Brussels, the language was losing ground nationally with the economic and demographic decline of Wallonia, still dependent upon coal mines and outmoded industry. As an indication of the bitterness of feeling, some Walloon activists blame Hitler for the relative decline of their region, charging that most young Flemish soldiers captured in the defeat of 1940 were released to go home and beget children, while their Walloon counterparts were kept in captivity away from wives and girlfriends. A typical Walloon view is that "The Flemish strategy toward Brussels and Wallonia has been worked out for decades and pursued single-mindedly with continual denials but advanced more vigorously day by day." (Brabant 1983)

Needless to say, this suspicion and hostility is fully reciprocated in the Dutch-speaking community. A Flemish scholar writing recently apologizes for the title *The Profile of Foreigners in Belgium*: "To publish a book with 'Belgium' in the title is somewhat behind the times. Flanders is our fatherland." Although legally Belgians, he notes, many Dutch-speakers think of themselves primarily as Flemings, and in Brussels they are "undoubtedly an ethnic minority . . . strangers in their own land" (Dumon 1982, 8, 11).

The major shift that has occurred between the two communities is not so much in relative numbers in the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking areas as in cultural hegemony. Wallonia represented 39.2 percent of the total population of Belgium in 1831 and never rose higher than 42.6 percent in 1866, when the mining and industrial sectors around Liege were booming. The proportion dropped to 38.7 percent of the total in 1920, to 34.5 percent in 1947, and to 32.1 percent at present (Andre 1983, 26). This does not include the Brussels region, which represents about 10 percent of the total Belgian population and is, as we have seen, an area in which French is predominant.

While French-speakers have never been in the majority in the Belgian population, however, they had always seen themselves in the leading role, until a more dynamic economy and a higher birthrate gave a sort of moral advantage to Flanders in recent decades. The persistence of the cultural hegemony of French in Brussels is all the more resented by Flemings as a result.

In 1962, the language census was abolished and the boundaries between the French and Dutch regions were frozen, in response to Flemish demands. In one of the more unfortunate aspects of the boundary adjustment the Dutch-speaking province Limburg was given the area of Fourons or Voeren, consisting of several communities with French populations and the focal point of recent linguistic conflict that has led to the fall of two national governments.

The next year, legislation placed language restrictions on education at all levels except university. No school in Flemish areas could teach primarily in French, nor could schooling be provided in Dutch in the Walloon areas. A child of French-speaking Belgian parents who moved to Ghent or a child of Dutch-speaking Belgian parents who moved to Charleroi could not legally be taught in his or her home language, nor could a Moroccan immigrant child who arrived in Antwerp speaking French as a second language be taught in French. Thus individual rights were sacrificed to the right of the language community to defend its borders.

The rationale for these restrictions was stated clearly in 1963 by a Flemish leader:

> In a land like Belgium where three languages are spoken, language peace is possible only when the relationships are stabilized, and when any form of language or cultural imperialism is repudiated. By stabilization of relationships we mean, first of all, that language boundaries and the homogeneity and integrity of the language areas are not only honored but legally guaranteed and protected and defended by the State. For the Brussels area, originally Flemish, where now French- and Dutch-speakers live mixed together, limits must be set on frenchifying policies, and all measures must be taken that are necessary to prevent language struggle and language imperialism. (Van der Elst in Clerck 1974, 156–57).

These educational policies were matched by provisions, in the language laws, requiring that jobs in the public service in Brussels be divided evenly between the two groups, though the city was around 80 percent French speaking, and that top civil service jobs would be open only to those competent in both languages.

In Brussels, where French- and Dutch-language schools may be in close proximity, the 1963 legislation required a careful determination of the primary language of the family, with a special "language inspection" service. Two inspectors, one from each language group, must consider each case, with disputes between them referred to a special commission (Baert 1984, 13). This commission adjudicated 133 cases from 1967 to 1971, when the requirements were eased; 55 children were allowed to stay in French-language schools but 41 were required to leave those for Dutch-language schools (Swing 1982, 279).

The law forbade Dutch and French sections in a single school. While the second language is taught as a subject, it may not be used as a language of instruction, and English may be substituted for it. Thus, apart from the Brussels area, studying the other national language is not required. Teachers of French in Dutch-language schools are Flemings who have learned French as a second language, not their Walloon compatriots for whom French is native, and the reverse is true of teachers of Dutch in French-language schools.

As a result of a modification enacted in 1971, parents in the Brussels area may now select the language in which their children will be educated. Since this was a concession to Francophones, the Dutch-speaking community won in exchange a guarantee that their schools would not be closed even if enrollment dropped well below the level at which a French-language school would be closed. This is intended to guarantee that a network of Dutch-language schools will be available despite the enrollment of around 85 percent of the children in the French-language system.

Recently, a trend has appeared (opposite to that expected in 1971) of Francophone parents sending their children to Dutch schools, for several reasons. Although the ostensible reason is that bilingual competency is increasingly necessary for good employment, benefiting the Dutch-speakers who are more likely to know French than vice versa, many observers believe that a more powerful reason is that French-language schools in Brussels tend to have a high proportion of North African and other immigrant students, who may be avoided by selecting a Dutch-language school (Swing, 285; Smeekens 1985, 56). In 1985, 16 percent of the children in Dutch-language kindergartens were from homogeneously French-speaking families. In a response characteristic of the Flemish attitude, immigration expert Johan Leman sees this not as a positive sign of the resurgence of Dutch but as a danger, since "a certain 'frenchifying' communication climate will presumably increase in the near future unless drastic action is taken by teachers, administrators, and supervisory personnel" (Leman 1985a, 25).

Rigidity about Language Diversity

Language issues in Belgian education show no sign of going away, nor does wide support exist for a true system of choice under which parents (outside Brussels) could opt for a bilingual education. As an illustration of the petty jealousy which prevents any such development, a local education official for French-language schools in a suburb of Brussels (a city surrounded on all sides by Dutch speakers) recently urged principals not to send children on field trips in Flanders!

The effect of the complicated three-cornered relationship among Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels is to produce a sense of grievance on all sides—Belgians have been described as one oppressed majority and two oppressed minorities—and an attitude that views language diversity as far more of a problem than an opportunity for enrichment. One study found

> a widespread assumption that bilingualism is at best a necessary evil: a necessity for national unity, at least in bilingual Brussels, but a danger to intellectual development if introduced too early and a one-way road to language loss. Language planning in this bilingual country reflects this assumption, for it fosters the development of linguistic ethnicity through separatism. . . . In the past Flemings were educated for integration into a Francophone world. Today they are educated for linguistic ethnicity. (Swing 1982, 267)

The result is that "[if] we define bilingual education as the use of two or more languages of instruction in a subject matter other than language instruction per se, we can safely state that only a small minority of students in Belgium receives this type of education." (Bustamante, Van Overbeke and Verdoodt 1978, 3)

Immigrants and the Limits of Diversity

The increasing number of immigrants, especially Turks and Moroccans, members of *real* minority groups (by American standards), has challenged the ability of the Belgian education system to accommodate profound differences. Accommodation has been made more difficult by the prevalent Belgian touchiness about language and its symbolic meaning.

A political scientist could write of Belgium, in the early 1960s, that "only islands of disadvantaged groups remain alienated from the community, and most people share its essentially middle-class values" (Lorwin 1966, 148). At that very period, however, the vigorous recruitment of foreign workers in Italy and Spain, in Morocco and Turkey was preparing what today is a major challenge to Belgian society.

The number of foreigners in Belgium grew from 2.8 percent of the total population in 1890 (many of them French and Dutch) to 3.9 percent in 1930, to 7.2 percent in 1970 and to 9 percent in 1980. Indeed, 95 percent of the increase in Belgian population between 1970 and 1980, and all of that in Wallonia, was the result of immigration and births to immigrant parents (Entzinger 1984, 187).

While the expectation was that these workers would return home with their savings (and most of the Spaniards, for example, have done so), many guest workers have become immigrants by the passage of time. A generation of their children, born in Belgium, are largely cut off from their lands of origin, but only uneasily at home in Limburg, Brussels, or Antwerp.

For Belgian education policy, finding workable solutions to the presence of immigrants has been particularly complicated because of the uneasy compromises already reached over the diversity existing within Belgian life.

> Although Belgium has a long tradition of immigration, the immigrants were until recently drawn from related if not identical cultures. This was especially true of Hungarians, Poles and Italians. The Italians form the largest group of foreigners in our country. They are also according to a number of indicators (housing for example) the best integrated. . . . It is only in the sixties that migrants from non-Christian religions streamed here in a visible way, while we in Belgium have no extensive tradition of religious and worldview pluralism and tolerance. To the contrary, this is for us a matter that must be settled by deals and negotiations, in other words an area of conflict and the advancement of interests. . . . In this repect as in others the migrants represent an enormous challenge for our culture. (Dumon 1982, 102)

The difficult compromises over language use have also complicated the reception of immigrants, especially as the nature of immigration and its destination have changed.

The language laws of 1962–63 are so prescriptive, in the effort to protect Flemish culture against French encroachment, that it is difficult to provide anything like true bilingual education, either in Dutch and French or in either language and the native languages of immigrants. The creation of comprehensive programs in the languages of immigrant groups would, after all, establish a precedent for parallel demands by French-speaking parents in Flanders and Dutch-speaking parents in Wallonia (Entzinger 1984, 194). Thus, instruction in languages other than French and Dutch is possible only with special permission, difficult to obtain.

Islamic religious instruction, by contrast, has been fitted easily within the legal framework of Belgian education, and is provided by teachers who have been approved by the religious leaders of the Islamic community. Only the recent development of "integrist" elements, rejecting much of Western culture, among Moslems has led to second thoughts: the government now requires that teachers of Islam in schools possess Belgian citizenship and have lived in the country for at least 5 years (Ephimenco 1986).

One reason to provide Islamic instruction within the school is to seek to reduce the influence of the supplemental "Koran schools" supported by many immigrant parents to provide rote instruction in religious practices and passages from the Koran in Arabic. Many observers perceive these schools as overtaxing students and alienating them from Belgian life by dismissing all of its manifestations as evil (Alfatli and Alfatli 1980, 177; Karaman 1980, 260).

Such Koran schools are illegal in Turkey, where religious instruction at the elementary level may be provided only in the government's schools, and their popularity in Western Europe is deplored by many as a threatening sign of Islamic fundamentalism (Gailly 1980). A fairer assessment might be that (however deplorable they may be pedagogically) the Koran schools represent an effort by immigrant parents, faced by mandatory school attendance laws, to retain control over at least one aspect of their children's socialization. Koran schools are perhaps comparable to the parochial schools supported by Irish and German immigrants to the United States in the 19th century, and equally deplored by educational and political leaders (see Glenn 1988, chapter 8). In this perspective they reflect a resistance to "modernity and its discontents" (Berger, Berger, and Kellner 1974).

As a secularized alternative, instruction in native languages is provided by teachers selected and paid by the embassies of the countries from which the immigrants have come. Thus the Italian government supported, in 1980, a national inspector, five provincial inspectors and 150 teachers in Belgium (Mauri 1980, 227). The native language and culture classes are usually provided as a supplement, after normal school hours, for students who are frankly acknowledged to be estranged culturally from their country of origin.

The presence of foreign teachers, offering lessons in the native language and culture of immigrant students, is intended to maintain contact with the unknown homeland as well as communication between the generations. In itself, however, it raises serious pedagogical questions. Should these teachers, for example, stress the "official culture" of the homeland, or the customs of the (often rural) milieu from which the parents came, or the new cultural forms coming into existence in the immigrant situation? Instruction may end up presenting a culture that no longer really exists, as modernization brings change in Anatolia and in the Moroccan Riff, in Calabria and in Thrace. On the other hand, that may be what parents cling to in their exile.

Some feel that the foreign governments who pay the teachers may prefer them to stress an essentially anachronistic version of the native culture, to foster conservative values and a sense of alienation from the Belgian situation. In Belgium as in West Germany, the liberal (or radical) educated Turks who work in social agencies and public schools tend to be hostile toward not only the Koran schools but also toward the after-school programs sponsored by their own government. Thus Karaman charges that the programs in Turkish language and culture "involve a barely concealed form of propaganda and political control, based on a semi-fascist ideology," while the function of the Koran schools "is to furnish to capitalism an ignorant, isolated and inoffensive labor force, by diverting its potential energy from the struggle between exploiters and the exploited" (Karaman 1980, 262).

Although many Moroccans speak French, it would be unthinkable for their children to be taught primarily in that language in Dutch-language schools: that would run directly counter to the language settlement reached at the highest levels of Belgian politics.

> Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels experience the presence of an increasing group of children who do not speak Dutch as a threat to their Flemish character. Indeed we see that during recess and moments of free play in the kindergarten Dutch is no longer used as the principal language of communication. . . . The school has to make a choice: either nothing is done and very soon the school becomes a melting pot just like home is to many children or the school tries to organise its language situation in a more structured way. (Smedt 1985b, 92)

Such plaints sound familiar; a similar concern about the language used in urban schools is expressed in many countries experiencing immigration. What is perhaps unique in the Belgian situation is that the concern expressed by Flemish educators is not about the use of Greek or of Italian, but of French by Italian and Greek children. Although French is one of the two national languages, and is a required subject in Dutch-language schools in Brussels starting in the third grade, its use at pre-school level by immigrant children is seen as a problem to be overcome through vigorous suppression and replacement by Dutch (Smedt 1985c).

The Foyer is a private social agency founded by a Flemish Catholic priest to meet the adjustment needs of migrant workers and their families. One of its programs (started in 1981) involves working with kindergarten and primary school classes in Dutch-language schools to provide native-language support that is integral to the program rather than a supplemental enrichment. In two of the project schools, the majority of students (56 and 69 percent) are from immigrant families and a substantial proportion (18 and 14 percent) from French-speaking Belgian families, so that children from Dutch-speaking families are in a distinct minority (Smeekens 1985, 56).

The implication is that foreign children (many of whom speak French with their parents) can be weaned away from a threatened identification with the French-speaking community by a stress, in the context of Dutch schooling, on their native language (Coppens 1985). In other words, the "Frenchifying" of Brussels would be to some extent retarded by preventing at least some immigrants from joining the Walloon camp.

As might be expected, this program has led to strains. The Foyer project has reached out vigorously to recruit students who in some cases were attending French-language schools, to the resentment of the latter. A number of Turkish families who already patronized French schools were persuaded to enroll their children in the Foyer program: "The fact that the project runs in a Flemish school plays an ambiguous part. As an alternative to the French schools and to avoid a preponderance of Moroccan children Turkish parents see a Flemish school as a positive change. But they do not attach, initially at least, too much importance to the Dutch language" (Smedt 1985d).

It was the possibility of instruction in Turkish language and culture (and home visits by the Foyer's Turkish teacher) that persuaded most of them to entrust their children to this project, although the older siblings were attending French-language schools.

Conclusions

Parent choice provides a framework within which it is possible to accommodate a wide range of visions of education. The structure of Belgian education provides ample opportunity for the exercise of choice on the basis of religious conviction—at least for Catholics and those with no religious preference.

The presence of thousands of immigrant children in Belgium is a major challenge to the Belgian educational system. Its structure would in theory allow a variety of responses, including schools strongly marked by the culture and language of particular groups yet seeking to enroll Belgian students as well for an integrated experience.

That such diversity and choice of schools are not strongly developed, despite one of the highest proportions of foreign children in any European country, seems to result from the extreme sensitivity of the issue of language in Belgium.

Is it possible that a healthy society is better served by the accommodation of pluralism, by allowing space in its central value-forming institution, the school, for groups defined by their beliefs and their culture, than by seeking to mold all to the same pattern?

Belgian education could respond to the presence of immigrants, with their distinctive beliefs and cultures as well as their unfamiliar languages, with the flexible accommodation that it has shown toward its own pluralism of belief. So far, however, it has tended to respond with the rigid and self-protective restrictions by which it has dealt with its language diversity. To an American observer, this seems to be a lost opportunity.

Britain

arental Choice in ritish Education

arent choice of schools is currently one of the most controversial issues in British politics. Expanded provisions for choice were pushed through Parliament by the Thatcher government 1988 over the opposition of most of the education establishment, d implementation is a source of continuing controversy.

Some of the choice of schools has—as in the United States—been ilable in private (often elite) schools that serve about 6 percent of al elementary and secondary enrollment. The national govern- nt subsidizes places in these schools for thousands of bright dents whose parents are not able to afford the fees; in special cumstances this subsidy includes boarding as well as tuition.

Within publicly funded schooling, other kinds of choice exist, ostly based upon the denominational association of schools. Thus,

> in the United Kingdom coexistence of private schools with state schools is not a coexistence of religious with secular schools. We do not have a secular system of public education. . . . All schools provide religious instruction, and public education includes both local-authority and "voluntary" schools, the latter being schools which are morally and administratively linked to particular religious faiths. And in the same way as publicly provided education in Britain cannot be characterised as secular, the private sector cannot be characterised as religious. . . . In Britain the established church, the Church of England, has its schools within the public sector. (Johnson 1987, 5f)

The denominational character of many voluntary schools may, in ractice, be greatly attenuated, but at the same time demand is owing for more religiously distinctive Evangelical schools as well for Islamic schooling.

Popular schooling developed in the 19th century, primarily by untary initiative, and government leadership developed relatively late. When it did, the intervention was motivated far less than on the Continent or in the United States by a concern to implement a state pedagogy in a common school for the sake of national unity.

As a result, nonpublic schools have been taken into the public system under arrangements that permitted them to retain their denominational identity, and parents continue to be able to choose, for example, a Church of England or a Roman Catholic school that by American standards is public in most respects. The proportion of students attending "independent" private schools is lower than in any nation of the European Community except West Germany and Luxembourg, since religious diversity is accommodated within the publicly supported system.

In recent years the growing assimilation of such alternatives to the norms of public education—and increased secularization—have resulted in demands for other forms of school choice. These demands have come from parents on the one hand and from Conservative Party strategists on the other. They resulted in legislation (in 1980 for England and Wales and in 1981 for Scotland) extending parent choice, and in new legislation filed in 1987 and enacted in 1988.

England and Wales

The history of popular schooling in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States has been one in which action by government has had priority, though it has frequently been resisted by churches and parents who insisted that education be based upon their own particular doctrines and goals.

The development of popular schooling in Great Britain followed a very different course. "Nation building" was not an urgent issue, as it was in the nations where schools were seen as an essential instrument of government.

The exception was Ireland, whose predominantly Catholic population could no longer, in the 19th century, simply be kept as a subordinate caste. A system of nondenominational "National schools" was created (to international applause) during the 19th century, as an ultimately unsuccessful means of knitting the Catholic Irish into the United Kingdom.

The Constitution of the present-day Irish Republic guarantees the right of the family to determine where children will be educated, and almost all elementary students attend publicly funded denominational schools. The few "private" elementary schools receive no government subsidy, but are subject to state supervision. At the secondary level, traditional schools are operated by religious teaching congregations, by private board of governors or by individuals, and receive public funding of 95 percent of staff salaries and 90 percent of facility costs. These schools are increasingly being replaced by vocational and comprehensive high schools managed by boards including religious and government representatives, and publicly funded in full.

In England and in Scotland, by contrast, the social tensions appearing in the 19th century related more to class, in the face of a growing industrial proletariat, than to ethnicity. The concern was with social rather than national unity. The established Church of England (Episcopalian) and Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) included, at least nominally, the majority of the respective populations, unlike the established Church of Ireland (Episcopalian) which never penetrated the mass of the Irish population. In France and in the Netherlands, as in Massachusetts, government initiatives to develop a system of common schools, shaped to serve the goals of the state, followed within 2 or 3 years the disestablishment of the respective churches and was at least partly intended to substitute for the socializing role of those churches. In England and in Scotland, by contrast, the churches were not disestablished nor were the schools, in a sense, "established" in their place.

The primary challenge to educational reformers in England and Scotland was, in James Kay-Shuttleworth's celebrated formulation in the 1860s, to develop in the common people "respect for the laws—the right discharge of civil functions and political franchises, the due subordination to authority—the harmony of classes—national patriotism" (quoted in Reeder 1980, 11).

In England popular schooling developed, over the course of the 19th century, primarily by nongovernment initiatives, though with increasing support from public funds. The background for such efforts lay in the English tradition of practical benevolence. The Church of England's Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had, since 1698, carried out an extensive program of voluntary effort to educate the children of the poor, establishing more than 50 schools around London by 1704, and 200 by midcentury. In the same period a religious revival led to the founding of a large number of endowed Charity Schools, in which children were clothed and fed as well as educated. The Protestant Dissenters, while less numerous, made notable efforts to provide alternatives to Church of England schooling for their children.

Such parish-based efforts were widespread by the early 19th century, though increasingly overwhelmed by the concentration of population as the result of industrialization. The "monitorial" schools that marshaled hundreds of students to instruct one another under the supervision of a single teacher, the "ragged schools" that reached out to the poorest children, and the village schools in their thousands were supported most often by private charity and by the exertions of the churches. Most were associated with the Church of England; in 1807, indeed, the Archbishop of Canterbury protested against a proposal that elementary schools be supported by public taxation on the basis that all education should be "under the control and auspices" of the Church. Several years later the "National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church" was founded, soon followed by the nondenominational (but Protestant) "British and Foreign School Society." The goal of the latter was to "teach the many great truths on which Christians are agreed," using the Bible as a textbook (Cornish 1910, 1:96).

Proposals to establish schools with no distinctive religious character were generally opposed by all groups: *The Times* wrote in 1839 of the "mischief" that would be caused by allowing Protestant children "to herd with the leprous brood of Papists, Socinians [Unitarians], Freethinkers and fanatics" (Murphy 1971, 20).

Over the next decades, the rival school societies made heroic efforts to establish and maintain elementary schools and teacher-training Normal Schools. By 1851, approximately a million students attended schools associated with the Church of England and 354,000 students attended schools with other sponsorship. A decade later, however, another million students were still receiving no formal schooling (Cornish 1910, 2:270).

The Widening State Role

It became increasingly clear during the course of the 19th century that charitable and church efforts alone could not meet the need to educate the urban poor. In 1833, public funding was provided for Protestant schools (for Roman Catholic schools public funding began in 1847), with a small government apparatus to oversee the use of funds. The right of government inspection was asserted "in order to secure conformity of the regulations and discipline established in the several schools with such improvements as may be from time to time suggested" (Cornish 1910, 1:201).

Government funding and inspection remained limited in this period, and did not lead to a conviction that government should assume the entire responsibility for education, as on the Continent. As the "Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Popular Education in England" concluded in 1861, "An attempt to replace an independent system of education by a compulsory system, managed by the Government, would be met by objections, both religious and political, of a far graver character in this country than any with which it has had to contend in Prussia" (quoted in Maclure 1986, 75).

Nevertheless, it grew increasingly clear that voluntary initiatives, even supplemented by public funding, could not provide an educational system that would reach the entire rising generation. James Kay-Shuttlesworth stressed, in 1866, that a "free Government cannot tolerate without extreme danger the want of education in the mass of the people," and Robert Lowe put it even more dramatically the following year, insisting that it was becoming "absolutely necessary that you should prevail on our future masters to learn their letters. . . . We must go further than permitting—we must compel. We must insist that there shall be some means or other by which education shall completely pervade in this country" (quoted in Reeder 1980, 77, 36n, 109).

In 1870, the first major step was taken in educational leadership by the national government. The declared purpose of the statute adopted that year, according to Liberal politician W. E. Foster, who introduced it, was "to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps," not to replace it (in Dyson and Lovelock 1975, 239). The statute resulted in

> the firm establishment at long last of a national framework for elementary education in England and Wales; the setting up of the "dual system" [of schools sponsored by local government and by churches or religious foundations] and the virtual pledge of its continuance; the acceptance by the state of its "secular role", of the need to treat all sects alike, and of the desirability of neutrality in its relations with school boards and Denominationalists. (Murphy 1971, 62)

Under this legislation England stopped short of adopting a system of free, universal, state-directed education on the contemporary American model, and mandatory attendance did not follow until 1882. Local education authorities were established, with the responsibility of maintaining their own schools as necessary to supplement the schools already available.

Although the national government provided grants to local government ("board") schools and denominational ("voluntary") schools alike, the former had a great advantage in receiving local tax support while the latter had to supplement their grants with contributions. A study in 1880 found that average per pupil expenditures in Anglican and Methodist schools was about 16 percent higher than in Roman Catholic schools, while that in board schools was 38 percent higher.

The voluntary schools found it difficult to provide a comparable education, though they were also anxious about the danger of control if they did receive funding from local taxes (Murphy 1971, 74–75).

Support grew for a new arrangement that would permit the voluntary schools to continue to make their contribution with a larger share of public support. By the turn of the century, even the Fabian Socialist Sidney Webb observed that "It is politically impossible to abolish these voluntary schools; and whatever we may think of the theological reasons for their establishment, their separate and practically individual management does incidentally afford what ought to be, in any public system of education, most jealously guarded, namely, variety and the opportunity of experiment" (quoted in Murphy 1971, 86).

In the period between 1870 and 1902, nearly 1,400 voluntary schools had become board schools, but the remaining voluntary schools continued to serve 52.5 percent of the total elementary enrollment. In 1902, legislation was enacted establishing local education authorities with responsibility for both board and voluntary schools. Conservative Prime Minister A. J. Balfour pointed out, in introducing this bill, that "We have, as a community, repudiated responsibility for teaching a particular form of religion. . . . As we have . . . left to the parents the responsibility for choosing what religion their children are to learn, surely we ought . . . to make our system as elastic as we can in order to meet their wishes." The new legislation was intended, "in the interests alike of parental liberty and of educational efficiency to terminate the present system of costly confusion" (Maclure 1986, 152–53).

Elementary education continued over the next decades to have a strong denominational presence, though at the secondary level the Church of England gave up the struggle in many areas as program and facility needs grew more demanding (Murphy 1971, 108).

Legislation adopted in 1944 established the present framework for support of voluntary schools within the public system, in line with a policy decision that "voluntary schools should not be abolished but rather that they should be offered further financial assistance, accompanied by a corresponding extension of public control which will ensure the effective and economical organization and development of both primary and secondary education" (quoted in Murphy 1971, 112).

The Education Act of 1944, adopted in the wartime spirit of unity and social reconstruction, provided for two types of publicly supported schools in England and Wales: county schools, established and operated by local education authorities, and voluntary schools, established by churches or benevolent individuals (generally some generations ago) and financially supported by the local education authorities. County schools presently represent more than two-thirds of publicly supported elementary schools and four-fifths of secondary schools.

There are three types of "voluntary" schools. The local authority pays all of the costs of "controlled" schools, and appoints the teachers; "aided" schools and "special agreement" schools receive operating costs from the authority but their sponsors must pay 15 percent of the capital (facilities) costs in exchange for the right to appoint teachers. Around 20 percent of British children attend "voluntary aided" schools.

Despite this extensive accommodation of confessional diversity within publicly funded education, parents still may not enjoy sharply profiled choices among schools. The effect of supervision by local education authorities has led to a great deal of uniformity between council and voluntary schools, while secularization has weakened the confessional identity of many of the latter. "Denominational bodies, though they have won the right to receive considerable public aid whilst retaining the power to appoint teachers of a particular faith, now in practice often consider themselves fortunate to obtain a teacher or lecturer of any religion or of none" (Murphy 1971, 123–24).

The Press for Comprehensive Secondary Schools

In the postwar years it became an article of faith in Labour ranks that secondary education should move to the "comprehensive" model of a single type of school, and away from the distinction—substantially correlated with social class—among grammar, secondary modern, and (only feebly developed) technical schools. This view was given support in a national report on the education of youth aged 15 to 18, issued in 1959, which described successful comprehensive schools as "drawing pupils together at an age when they otherwise begin to draw apart," and acting "as an effective sign of that unity in society which our age covets" (*15 to 18* 1959, 1, 418). But forces other than idealism were behind the press to restructure British education. Secondary Modern schools had grown increasingly unpopular with the growing middle class, while the number of places at the academically oriented Grammar schools was limited to the top 20 percent of the ability range. A study, in 1961, of students leaving school a decade earlier, found that 79 percent of those who had attended Grammar schools but only 25 percent of those who had attended Secondary Modern schools were in middle-class occupations. For Labour's leader Harold Wilson the politically appealing goal was to provide "Grammar schools for all" and so to ensure support among the lower middle class and aspiring working class (Weeks 1986, 1–12).

With the Labour victory in 1964, the opportunity came to act upon the new government's "declared objective to end selection at [age] eleven plus and to eliminate separatism in secondary education" (Maclure 1986, 302). The Labour Minister of Education is reported, by his widow, to have exclaimed, "If its the last thing I do, I'm going to destroy every [expletive deleted] grammar school in England and Wales. And Northern Ireland" (quoted in Flew 1987, 27). Only comprehensive schools would receive grants for construction, and local education authorities were put under pressure to develop consolidation plans.

In 1970, the Conservatives returned to office, and Education Secretary Margaret Thatcher moved to "save" 92 Grammar schools. Stating that "it is wrong to impose a uniform pattern of secondary organization on local education authorities," she called for "close consultation with those representing the denominational and other voluntary schools," with teachers, and with parents (Maclure 1986, 352–53).

Labour returned to office in 1974 and again pressed for comprehensive schools. An act passed by Labour in 1976 required local authorities and voluntary organizations sponsoring schools to develop plans for reorganization on comprehensive lines within 5 years, as the price for government funding: "Education is to be provided only in schools where the arrangements for the admission of pupils are not based (wholly or partly) on selection by reference to ability or aptitude" (Maclure 1986, 384). This requirement was repealed in 1979, when the Conservatives returned to power with Margaret Thatcher as prime minister.

The Charter of Parents' Rights

Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act stipulated that "In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties . . . the Minister and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents" (Maclure 1986, 225).

Lord Justice Denning noted in a 1955 case, however, that

> Section 76 does not say that pupils must be in all cases educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. It

> only lays down a general principle to which the [authority] must have regard. This leaves it open to the [authority] to have regard to other things as well and also to make exceptions to the general principle if it thinks fit to do so. It cannot be said that an [authority] is simply at fault because it does not see fit to comply with parents' wishes. (quoted in Raab and Adler 1987, 158–59)

By the late 1970s, national education authorities were receiving up to 10,000 appeals a year from parents dissatisfied with their assigned schools, representing around 2 percent of all admissions to primary and secondary schools in England and Wales (*Times Educational Supplement*, hereafter *TES*, May 8 1987); few of these were upheld, but the Ministry did engage in disputes with local authorities whose assignment provisions were particularly rigid (Raab and Adler 1987, 159).

Extension of parent choice, promoted by Tory intellectuals Rhodes Boyson and Norman St. John Stevas, became a basic element of Conservative education policy with the Charter of Parents Rights included in the party's platform for the October 1974 elections. This Charter was an element of a general critique of the extension of the Welfare State in postwar Britain. As Tory Antony Flew argued,

> the supply of food is, surely, even more important than the supply of teaching services. . . . Yet, however fiercely it might be fretted with anxieties that all our children should be provided with a national core diet . . . it is hard to imagine that any government subject to the discipline of free elections would even entertain the possibility of introducing measures—enormously expensive measures, necessarily requiring massive increases in general taxation—in order to provide all such children's food "free" at the point of supply, or at the point of consumption, either in shops or (eventually no doubt) in messes, all established and managed by Local Food Monopolies (LFMs). . . . It becomes harder still if we further suppose that the system has developed to the stage where all children are allocated to whichever of the LFM's shops or restaurants the LFM bureaucracy shall in its always greater than parental wisdom—"for administrative reasons" and "to ensure the economical employment of grocery and messing resources"—decide to be most suitable. (Flew 1987, 98)

The successful effort made by Tory intellectuals to present themselves as being in touch with the concerns and desires of the public, and to foster their resentment of the progressive establishment, has been a key element of the "Thatcher Revolution." This desire to respond to the concerns of noneducators, as well as a fundamental belief in the efficacy of markets, led naturally to presenting parent choice of schools as a cornerstone of educational reform. "While the rationale for parental choice had initially emphasised freedom from state control and the assumption of parental responsibilities for their children, it was now presented as a means of improving educational standards—the introduction of market forces would force unpopular (poor) schools to close and enable popular (good) schools to expand" (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 296).

The Conservative 1979 Election Manifesto promised that "Our PARENTS' CHARTER will place a clear duty on government and local authorities to take account of parents' wishes when allocating children to schools, with a local appeals system for those dissatisfied. Schools will be required to publish prospectuses giving details of their examination and other results" (quoted in Cooper 1988).

Soon after taking office in 1979, the Conservatives filed legislation to implement their educational program, including parent choice, and it was enacted as the Education Act of 1980. As an official explanation of the new legislation informed local authorities, they were required to

> make arrangements for enabling parents of children who are in their area to express a preference as to the school they wish their children to attend, and for the parents to give reasons for their preference. . . . They may fulfil their duty in a variety of ways. Some may invite parents to express a series of preferences in priority order, others may propose a school at which a place is available but provide for parents who wish their child to attend a different school to express their preference in response. (Department of Education and Science 1981)

The legislation also required the local authority to pay tuition and other costs for children who gained admission to a school operated by another authority or to a "voluntary" school, with parents paying for transportation. "In a few cases, where local schools are perceived of 'poor' quality, up to 30% of the children have transferred out" (Cooper 1988, 6). This provision is generally similar to the school choice policy adopted in Minnesota in 1988.

This sweeping requirement to honor parent choices was restricted significantly by a provision enabling authorities "to 'manage' parental preference in line with their own policies" (Johnson 1987, 62). Admission to a school could be denied if it would "prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources." This stipulation is clearly so broad that an authority determined to discourage choices could turn down many requests. Thus the negative impact used as a justification could be on any school in the system, not just the school a student was seeking to leave or to attend. Parent choice is rarely convenient to education authorities for whom stability and predictability are primary virtues of sound management. If, for example, the movement of children out of an unpopular school would cause it to operate at less than optimal student/teacher ratios, and thus impose additional costs, the transfer could be refused under the provisions of the 1980 Act.

Another feature of the 1980 legislation was the Assisted Places Scheme under which "bright children from less affluent homes" could be admitted to independent (private) schools, with the government paying part or all of the costs.

> Their government-assisted presence there was justified as an extension of parental choice, a restoration of academic opportunities to many children who would not be fully "stretched" in schools which had to cope with a full range of [student] ability, and a protection both for individuals and the nation's resources of talent against the levelling-down effects attributed to comprehensive reorganisation. Opponents of the Scheme saw it as an offensive declaration by the Government that the public sector was incapable of providing for very able children, and as a government-sponsored withdrawal of middle-class support from schools so evidently identified as second-best. (Edwards, Fitz, and Whitty 1986)

In 1986 some 22,000 students were supported in this way in 226 independent schools, in some cases on a boarding basis (see Salter and Tapper 1985, for discussion of the policy process).

The Education Act of 1988

A group of hard-line Tories asserted, in the 1986 publication *Whose Schools?—A Radical Manifesto*, that "There is no longer a consensus about education in Britain. Doubts about education are now so deep-rooted that people cannot readily agree on educational policy. The country stands in need of a period of open debate, during which new and freer institutions of education will be able to flourish and to win the support of the public" (Hillgate Group 1986).

The lack of effective parent choice, they argued, had helped to debase the quality of education. "Like every monopolized industry, the educational system has begun to ignore the demands of the consumers—parents and children—and to respond instead to the requirements of the producers—LEAs and teachers." Thus

> The first and most important step in any comprehensive reform of the state educational system, is to give more power to the parents. We believe this should be done by giving all parents a right which the rich have always enjoyed—the right to choose and to obtain the most suitable education for their children. Parents should be free to withdraw their children from schools that are unsatisfactory, and to place them in the schools of their choice. They should not be compelled to see their children subjected to lessons which they regard as morally or religiously offensive, nor should they be forced to stand helplessly by, while their children are subjected to grotesque social or political experiments in the name of education. (Hillgate Group 1986).

Despite the existing provisions for parent choice, and the ending of pressure from the national government for conversion of the remaining Grammar schools to the comprehensive structure, Conservatives were concerned about the continuing power of Labour (sometimes in alliance with Liberals) in local education authorities and in the teaching profession.

Some months later, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told the 1987 Conservative Party conference that

> Our most important task in this Parliament is to raise the quality of education . . . in the inner cities—where youngsters must have a decent education if they are to have a better future—that opportunity is often snatched from them by hard-left education authorities and extremist teachers. . . . The key to raising standards is to enlist the support of parents. The Labour left—hard, soft, and in-between—hate the idea that . . . parents should be able to choose their children's education. The Conservative Party believes in parental choice. . . . There's no reason at all why local authorities should have a monopoly of free education. What principle suggests this is right? What recent experience or practice suggests it is even sensible? (*TES*, October 16, 1987)

Thus Conservatives continued to search for ways to allow parents to have more direct control on the content of schooling, confident that the effect would be their "choosing the many schools which still offer a sensible curriculum and spurning the schools currently imposing a wayward curriculum" (O'Keeffe 1986, 14).

In order to implement the Conservative program, Education Minister Kenneth Baker proposed legislation in mid-1987 to extend both parent choice and the autonomy of individual schools. As usual, this was announced through the "Queen's Speech" to Parliament, which "heralded the biggest shake-up to state education since 1944": "My Government will take action to raise standards throughout education and to extend parental choice. Legislation will be introduced to provide for a national curriculum, delegation of school budgets and greater autonomy for schools" (*TES*, July 3, 1987).

An important provision of what was eventually enacted as the Education Act of 1988 requires local education authorities to admit the greatest possible number of students to popular schools rather than to protect less popular schools by imposing artificially low limits at the schools to which their students might transfer. "Not all of these pupils need live in the area of the LEA in which the school operates. If an excess demand for places at a particular school should arise, the LEA or the school governors will have the power to determine the nature of the admissions criteria . . . which will allocate pupils to the available places" (Ashworth, Papps, and Thomas 1988, 19).

This language is intended to prevent local authorities from hiding behind the provision of the 1980 Act that permitted them to deny parent requests that would "prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources," even in schools other than the one to which students sought to transfer (see Department of Education and Science 1987b).

An effect of this change, critics warned, could be racial segregation, as white parents took advantage of the opportunity to flee schools with many Asian or West Indian students (in inner London alone, 20 secondary schools have more than 60 percent minority enrollment). The under secretary of state for education, Baroness Hooper, insisted in 1987 that "If we are allowing freedom of choice to parents we must allow that choice to operate. If it ends up with a segregated system, then so be it" (*TES*, December 4, 1987).

In an incident which attracted tremendous attention, the parents of 26 children in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, objected when their primary-level children were assigned to Headfield Junior School rather than to Overthorpe School, which they had requested though it was further from their homes. While both are (publicly funded) Church of England schools, the enrollment of Headfield was 85 percent Asian and that of Overthorpe was only 10 percent minority. The assignment was not an attempt at desegregation, but was simply based on administrative convenience.

Their concerns, the parents insisted, were not with race but with the multicultural curriculum which they perceived as substituted for the teaching of Christianity at Headfield School. "Stories have been spread about Headfield school (for example, that it does not celebrate Christmas, and children make chapattis on Shrove Tuesday instead of pancakes) which have brought counter accusations of racism" (*TES*, September 11, 1987). At least one Asian parent, on the other hand, had been able to obtain a transfer of her child from Headfield to another school because she did not want her in an all-Asian class, out of concern that she would not learn English well. The English parents complained of reverse discrimination.

Refusing to accept the assignment to Headfield, the parents operated a classroom in a pub, with volunteer retired teachers, for 9 months while their lawsuit against the local education authority made its way to the High Court. The suit received strong support from elements of the Tory Right, which saw it as a test case for parent rights as well as for their objections to multicultural education (*TES*, July 8, 1988). The local authority's case collapsed over the issue of whether appropriate procedures for setting enrollment limits had been followed, and the parents were allowed to enroll their children in Overthorpe school. They continued to insist, through their attorney, that race was not the issue, but that they "have a natural desire that their children should be educated in a traditional English and Christian environment" (*TES*, July 15, 1988). One commentator noted that "by promising 'consumer choice' to parents, Mr. Baker has unleashed powerful forces that could lead to conflict" (*The Economist*, September 12, 1987).

A similar issue of choice with racial overtones arose in Wakefield in 1989, when parents of a 4-year-old objected to her assignment to a school with one-third Asian enrollment and asked for a school that was 98 percent white. The education authorities argued that the desired school was full and "additional pupils would 'prejudice the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources.'" The girl's mother insisted that the family's objection to the assigned school was not racial but cultural: "'It's to do with culture, Englishness and Christianity.' [The assigned school], she claimed, taught her daughter how to write her name in Punjabi, and she came home with cards made to celebrate Eid, a Muslim festival." The parents appealed the assignment to the new education secretary, John MacGregor, who would have to balance the requirements of the parent choice law and the race relations law (*TES*, August 11, 1989).

An even more controversial provision of the Education Act of 1988 allows any of some 27,000 publicly funded schools to "opt out" of local education systems and to acquire independent [government-] grant-maintained status. The government's announced purpose in proposing this provision was "to increase the autonomy of schools and their responsiveness to parental wishes" and thus to "add a new and powerful dimension to the ability of parents to exercise choice within the publicly provided sector of education." The government's action was based upon the belief that the "greater diversity of provision which will result should enhance the prospect of improving education standards in all schools. Parents and local communities would have new opportunities to secure the development of their schools in ways appropriate to the needs of their children and in accordance with their wishes, within the legal framework of a national curriculum."

The governors of a school may (indeed, must) apply to the national education authorities for permission to opt out of the local system if the parents vote to do so. If the application to national authorities is approved, the school receives a direct grant at a level corresponding to that given, by the LEA, to comparable schools continuing under its jurisdiction. This grant comes from the national Department of Education and Science, but the local share of the funds is recovered from the LEA. The school may not change its character—for example, from Church of England to nondenominational, or from comprehensive to academic—without approval from national education authorities.

This provision delivers on the announced intention of the Tory Right to free schools from the control of local education authorities—who Tories perceived as dominated by the Left.

Local government representatives nationwide tended to divide along political lines over the Baker Bill, though some Conservatives among them joined the opposition. The opting out proposal in particular encountered "unprecedented hostility from educational professionals," with all associations but one opposed and that one undecided (*TES*, October 2 1987). One education policy analyst predicted a "wholesale privatization of local authority services," with a blurring of the distinction between public and private schooling (*TES*, September 18, 1987). A head teacher urged his peers to resist the temptation to opt out:

> Education has a critical effect on whether, in society, we have unity or division. . . . As a head I think I understand the individual feelings of those who may be considering grant-maintained status because they are beset and frustrated by the policies of their local authority. . . . What about their colleagues whose schools will be diminished through loss of pupils, staff, morale, resources and the

> parental support? . . . Already divisiveness has started, and this when the maintained [public] sector of education needs unity of purpose above all. (Horn 1987)

Labour Party spokesmen were predictably opposed to the opting out proposal, but some took care to stress that they supported parent choice as a general principle. Labour's position was an awkward one, defending the status quo while the Conservatives in power were calling for reform. This created serious dilemmas for Labour, so long allied with organized teachers and hostile to nongovernment schooling. Parents in Birmingham, for example, threatened to split the Labour ranks with a demand to send their children to a popular secondary school (in a working-class area) whose headteacher was willing to accept students over the official limit (*TES*, June 26, 1987).

Neil Fletcher, the new chief of the Inner London Education Authority, pointed out at the 1987 Labour Party conference that Labour-controlled LEAs ran 75 percent of the nation's schools, and could not continue defensively to protect the status quo and blame Tory fiscal policies for all the problems of education. After losing three national elections in a row, the party should "review its policies [and] analyse the reasons for the deep-seated resistance to them among the electorate. . . . I believe we must speak out forcefully on the issues about which parents care most deeply. . . . Schools do not exist for [municipal] councillors to control nor for teachers to exercise ideological hegemony over an entire generation." Thus Socialists (Labour) should begin to stress parent choice, Fletcher said, and indeed implement American-style magnet schools in London and elsewhere. "The words that Kenneth Baker now uses to describe the current Tory education policies have been hijacked from the vocabulary of Socialist education prophets. [Curriculum-specialized secondary schools] could make working class aspirations and potential more achievable within the state system. They could convince a generation of parents that Labour education policy puts 'choice' first" (*TES*, November 6, 1987).

Fletcher's position did not find universal support in Labour circles. The new head of the National Union of Teachers, Doug McAvoy, insisted that parent choice was a "chimera, and cannot be delivered to everyone. . . . It is incompatible with the principle of equality of opportunity, a basic Labour Party tenet" (*TES*, November 13, 1987).

The newly organized Social Democrats sought to make their own mark as supporters of parent choice, on the basis of the conviction that Britain is becoming a

> society in which a considerable proportion of what used to be called the proletariat believe their interests to be inextri-

> cably bound up with those of the traditional middle class. It is sometimes clumsily called "embourgeoisification" and it is what the Prime Minister is hell-bent on doing to the inner cities . . . Voters are opting for the Tories because they believe in the values espoused by them—and if that is what the customers want, then is it not what a democratic political party should give them? Parents . . . want more choice and vouchers is the way to give it to them. But in order to protect the weak, the vouchers system should only be "cashable" at schools which did not impose selection tests, did not charge additional fees, and were recognized as efficient by HM Inspectorate. (Hugill 1987b)

Social Democrat education specialist Anne Sofer proposed to provide vouchers to all parents, redeemable at both publicly funded and private ("independent") schools (*TES*, August 28, September 4, 1987). The "opting out" proposal, on the other hand, Sofer characterized as "not a liberating, but a profoundly conservative force, freezing institutions exactly where they are at present." The alternative Conservative proposal for open enrollment was far sounder (*TES*, July 17, 1987).

Perhaps the most curious opposition to "opting out" came from the churches, which might normally be expected—as in other countries—to support any extension of the rights of parents to choose schooling for their children. The fear was expressed by Church of England authorities that the opportunity to gain autonomy without having to make the financial contribution (15 percent of facilities costs) in exchange for which "aided" schools enjoyed some independence from LEA controls might drive church schools out of existence. "I sometimes think the Government is more idealistic about Church schools than we are," said a Church of England official (*TES* November 20, October 9 1987).

Roman Catholic education authorities, on the other hand, expressed concern that parents defiant of diocesan guidelines could use the opting out provision to become independent of Church authority (*TES*, October 16, 1987).

As a counterpoint to these concerns over denominational schools that, in the course of their association with local education authorities, have lost much of their doctrinal flavor, some 50 small Evangelical schools—all founded since 1979—are seeking to "opt in" to the publicly funded system, with guarantees that they will be allowed to keep "their unique character and identity" (*TES*, January 15, 1988). The objective of parents is to send their children to schools which "complement the ethos of the home and the church rather than producing conflict;" leaders stress their difference from elite independent schools, saying "We are not just another prep-school. We only charge [tuition] because the state won't fund us" (*TES*, March 24, 1989).

The more than 20 independent Muslim schools, serving immigrant children, have been unsuccessful in obtaining funding from local authorities concerned about conflicts between the values taught by these schools, especially with respect to the role of women, and those held by the (often Labour-dominated) authorities. Moslem parents are equally concerned about these conflicts, and their concern makes many of them determined to send their children to Islamic schools. That they should have to do so at their own expense, while Roman Catholic and Church of England schools are government supported, seems to them unfair.

The Union of Muslim Organizations wrote in 1975 that "most Muslims acknowledge that Britain is a fair place to live, . . . but it is hard to judge how possible it is to live as a Muslim in British society as a whole" (quoted in Tomlinson 1984, 147). The mosques in Birmingham (55 of them in 1981) published a booklet warning parents "of all the school practices which run counter to Islamic precepts and informing them of their legal rights regarding their children in English schools" (Joly 1988, 42). An Islamic Center in London produced a widely circulated flier on "the duties Muslim children MUST observe while they are at school," and stressing the need for *halal* food, modesty in dress, and the need for sex-segregation in physical education (Nielsen 1988, C7).

An area of particular difficulty for Moslem parents is the schooling of their daughters, for whom coeducational classes and—even more problematical—physical education and extracurricular activities are deeply offensive. Britain has a long tradition of separate-sex schools, but these have been largely abandoned during the reorganization process to make secondary education "comprehensive" in the interest of equity. Often Moslem parents have taken the lead in seeking to prevent the closing or merger of the remaining girls' secondary schools.

It is not only with respect to the segregation of the sexes, but also in the approach taken to the education of girls that the educational agenda of the British Left is in conflict with the concerns of Moslem parents and community leaders. "The form of single sex education which at least some of them are advocating for girls would entail a far more central focus in the curriculum on education for marriage and motherhood in a particular Islamic sense, with other subjects receiving far less attention and with the notion of careers education being seen as irrelevant to the pattern of adult life which the girls were likely to pursue" (Nielsen 1988, 505). Such a form of instruction would conflict with the concern of the Left for the "emancipation" of women from stereotyped roles and assumptions about their options in life.

The official Swann Report on the education of children from ethnic minority groups, while deploring the growing interest in separate schools, noted that

> the right of ethnic minority communities to seek to establish their own voluntary aided [i.e., government-subsidized] schools is firmly enshrined in law. . . . Where an ethnic minority community which wishes to establish a voluntary aided school is of a distinct religious character, their school would thus be parallel to existing Church of England, Roman Catholic and indeed Jewish schools which are already part of our education system. Where the ethnic minority community concerned does not have a clear religious identity . . . proposals to establish a voluntary aided school may be complicated by the provisions of the 1976 Race Relations Act which do not allow for admissions to a maintained [government-subsidized] school to be limited according to race. (*Education for All* 1985, 499)

The Sikh community in Southall sought, in 1980, to acquire a secondary school facility, Moslem parents in Bradford tried to buy five schools in 1983, and in the Newham section of London five schools have been targeted for "opting out" of the public system with continuing state funding as "grant-maintained" Islamic schools (*TES*, December 4, 1987).

Much attention has focused on efforts by Moslems in the London borough of Brent to take over a school building designated for closing. Despite support from Tory members of the Council, the Islamia Primary School—founded in 1982 and with a waiting list of 600—was not allowed to have the surplus building. The view of the Labour majority was that what was needed was an "inter-faith school" with a "cross-curriculum spirituality," whatever that means (*TES*, June 17, 1988).

The leader of the group sponsoring the Islamia School pointed out that it was "mixed racially and has 23 nationalities;" the goal was not ethnic nor linguistic but religious:

> Christians and Jews are allowed to have [government-] aided schools but all sorts of reasons are given for stopping Muslims from having them. The "suppression" of equal

> opportunities for girls, for example, has been cited more than once and yet Muslim girls' schools have been established precisely because such equality is missing in the state system where untold pressures are brought to bear on devout youngsters, harming their education progress. (Hewitt 1988)

The basis for such efforts to obtain separate schools appears to be a growing conviction that no accommodation to Moslem beliefs and values was "feasible or indeed desireable within the existing system and in order to provide a true Islamic education for their children, it is necessary to provide Muslim aided schools" (*Education for All* 1985, 503). As the Swann Committee was told,

> a major worry for Muslim parents is the fact that their children soon begin to adopt English standards and ideas. . . . Islam is not something which can be learnt and adhered to overnight. It must be lived, breathed and fostered until it cannot be separated from life itself. Most Muslims acknowledge that Britain is a fair place to live, and in many ways they have come to depend upon it for their livelihood, but it is hard to judge how possible it is to live as a Muslim within the society as a whole. (*Education for All* 1985, 504)

The Swann Committee suggested that accommodations of the concerns of Moslem parents could be made within the educational system, and thus reduce the demand for separate schools. "If schools were seen by parents to be offering a more broadly-based curriculum, which reflected the multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-faith nature of Britain today we feel this would counter many of the anxieties which have been expressed" (*Education for All* 1985, 509).

This seems contrary to the same group's observation that "much of the evidence which we have received in favour of Muslim schools stresses the need to create an Islamic ethos permeating every aspect of school life. The major aspiration of such a school is seen as educating children to be first and foremost 'good Muslims' and all the other aspects of education being seen of secondary concern" (*Education for All* 1985, 504).

Parents seeking such a form of education for their children would not easily be satisfied with a curriculum relativizing all forms of religious expression. Opposition exists within the Moslem community in Britain even to inclusion of teaching about Islam within the mandatory religious education instruction, unless taught by a Moslem (Zaki 1982).

A curious aspect of the Dewsbury incident described above, in which English parents charged that the multi-cultural education in their local school neglected traditional Christianity, was the support received from the separatist Muslim Parents' Association, which pointed out that "our children are at the same disadvantage because the state system makes no provision for Islamic teaching or our moral way of life, our culture or heritage" (*TES*, September 11, 1987).

A Moslem group in Kirklees has sought to acquire an existing elementary school in order to operate a school—for which they intended to seek government funding. An existing Islamic girls' high school was refused "voluntary aided" status by the local authorities, who argued that there was insufficient demand—despite the maintenance of four private schools by Moslem parents (*TES*, November 25, 1988). Hundreds of parents withheld their children from school in protest, with the radical Kirklees Black Workers Group somewhat reluctantly supporting the demands of devout Moslems for education that would not offend against the Koran (*TES*, December 16, 1988).

The Zakaria Moslem Girls High School, over which the Kirklees storm broke out, teaches all lessons in English and about 80 percent of the curriculum is similar to that in other schools in Britain, with the balance devoted to religious instruction. The organization which supports the 15 independent Islamic schools in Britain, including Zakaria, claims that examination results show that their pupils strongly outperform Moslem pupils in state schools (*The Daily Telegraph*, February 22, 1989).

The school leaders insist they are not opposed to teaching science and other modern subjects, but that Muslim schools teach that God is the ultimate cause of everything. "This permeation of the entire curriculum by one's religious faith is not singular to Islam. The same conviction and consequent dissatisfaction with the provisions of the state education system has produced over 40 'Christian' schools in this country, all independent, where every subject sustains the Christian ethos" (Lodge 1989).

While Evangelical Christian schools are sometimes deplored—and denied government funding—they are not perceived as a threat in the same way as are the Moslem schools, in part because of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism through the Rushdie Affair, and in part because of the foreign origin of most Moslems, Sikhs, and Hindus. In May 1989, however, the Labour Party's National Executive Committee voted in favor of government funding for Moslem schools, largely because several of its members represent urban districts with large and increasingly mobilized ethnic minority populations (*TES*, May 12, 1989). This vote was a significant reversal for a party which has long opposed nonpublic schooling.

The Conservatives, for their part, make no apologies for efforts to use their political ascendancy to promote the widest possible extension of parental choice of schools. Education Minister Kenneth Baker answered the critics of his bill in early 1988 by insisting that

> Our policies seek to encourage all parents to take their responsibilities seriously and to create opportunities for the conscientious majority to set an example to the rest. The way to increase the sense of responsibility in society is to let more members of society exercise responsibility. . . . With grant-maintained schools, we now seek to carry the concept of parental choice to the heart of our education system. True choice should not simply be the privilege of the rich. (*TES*, January 8, 1988)

And went on to make the telling point that

> I find it extraordinary that local government should so easily concede that grant-maintained [opting-out] schools will take the best, leaving to LEAs all the rest. If GM schools excel, it will not be because of better financial provision; they will be funded on an equal basis with neighbouring schools. Their success will depend upon their management and upon parental commitment and that recipe, through financial delegation and more open enrolment, is available to all schools. . . . I want to create a spur which will oblige all LEAs to deliver excellence. The competition of grant-maintained schools will help to do that. (*TES*, January 8, 1988)

After enactment of the legislation in mid-1988, attention shifted to the efforts made by Conservative groups to encourage schools to "opt out" of Labour-dominated local education authorities—and efforts by a few Conservative-dominated LEAs to discourage opting out by schools under their jurisdiction. The Ministry of Education has taken care not to approve opting out by schools that were about to be closed by their LEAs because judged unviable; such applications were rejected in order to ensure that the first schools that opted out would be successful.

Scotland

Scottish education has evolved rather differently than education in England and Wales, in part because schooling in Scotland entered the 19th century with a strong heritage of direction from the national level combined with local initiative and management. The efforts of John Knox and other 16th-century reformers of Church and State to establish "righteousness" in the social and political order relied in large measure upon universal schooling.

> Warning of the need to "be most careful for the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this Realm," the reformers' blueprint for the divine commonwealth boldly proposed a national education system that included a teacher to instill the "first rudiments, and especially . . . the Catechism" in every rural parish and a school "to teach Grammar, and the Latin tongue [in every town] of any reputation" (*First Book of Discipline 1560–61*, quoted in Camic 1983, 141).

As a result of steady efforts by parish officials, local landowners, and municipal councils, Scotland developed an extensive coverage of what were essentially common elementary schools, tied to the kirk (parish church) but publicly funded. In 1702 the Scottish Parliament ordered that every community support a school, with the teacher approved by the local minister of the Church of Scotland (Murphy 1971, 11).

With a heavy Irish immigration to industrial jobs in western Scotland during the second half of the 19th century, the Catholic Church mounted a great effort to provide schools, and by 1910, 220 of the 286 voluntary denominational schools were Catholic. In a new arrangement adopted in 1918 local education authorities took these schools fully into the public system, with an agreement that instruction and teachers would continue to be approved by denominational authorities. Unlike the "dual system" in England and Wales, these institutions became fully assimilated public schools, though with a confessional character, and this arrangement has continued in effect. At present, 79 out of some 400 secondary schools in Scotland are Roman Catholic (Murphy 1971, 103; *The Economist*, May 24, 1986).

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1946 required education authorities to "have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents" (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 290).

This provision was part of the compromise that brought most confessional schools into the public education system, with parents having a right to select such schools unless it would create too great a burden upon the local authority. Essentially, what it protected was the right of government to continue to operate confessional schools, not the right of individual parents to control the education of their children (Raab and Adler 1987, 158).

This provision meant less than appears on the surface, since it set no requirements as to how assignments would be made. A broad area of discretion was left for education authorities to decide that efficiency required that students attend their local school on the basis of attendance zones. The tradition of the "common school" is rooted as deeply in Scotland as anywhere in the world, as noted by Horace Mann in his admiring account, in the 1840s, of Scottish schools. The tradition was reinforced by the growing interest, after World War II, in the "omnibus school" providing a comprehensive secondary program to all students in a residential area. In 1977 the proportion of students for whom nonroutine assignments were sought was less than 1 percent in most of Scotland, and far less in rural areas.

There are Catholic public schools in the areas where demand exists—for example, 15 elementary schools in Edinburgh and 14 in Dundee, but more in Glasgow with its large Irish population. Such schools, however, are effectively assimilated into the local systems with attendance areas that may encompass those of several nondenominational schools. The head of a Catholic school included in a study of school selection reported that 10 percent of his students were not Catholic, and the researchers encountered one case of a Muslim family "choosing a Catholic school because of its greater overall respect for religion" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay, 321–22). A few private schools exist as well, serving about 3.5 percent of the total student population and supported by tuition and endowment.

A decision to send a child to a Catholic or other confessional public school is not regarded as a "choice" in the sense of the 1980–81 legislation; such a decision is simply an instance of the accommodation of religious preferences that has evolved over the past century and more. In fact, "the Catholic church does not lead the movement for parental choice of school in Scotland in the way that it does in some countries (for instance in France) because the nature of the compromise between the Catholic church and the state in Scotland has enabled Catholic schools to attract families of their faith without needing choice of school as the mechanism to opt out of the local state school" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 320).

Parent choice, although implicit in the 1946 legislation, was given a strong boost by the Education (Scotland) Act of 1981 (for complete text, see Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 340–46). Under this act, pushed through by the Conservative majority in Parliament over the resistance of the Labour-dominated local education authorities and professional associations in Scotland,

> parents were given the right to request that their children [be] admitted to a particular school or schools; education authorities are required to comply with parental requests

> unless a statutory exception to this general duty applies; dissatisfied parents have the right to appeal to a statutory appeal committee and, if the latter finds in favour of the parent, its decision is binding on the authority; and education authorities are required to provide parents with information about the school to which their child has been allocated and about any other school if the parents ask for it. (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 303)

While these provisions are parallel to those in England and Wales, in several respects the Scottish legislation provides even more rights to parents. The grounds upon which parent choice may be denied are much more narrowly stated: only when approving the request would require employing an additional teacher or significant extensions or alterations to the school facility or would "be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline at the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there" (Adler, Petch and Tweedie 1987, 303–4)

The history of the adoption of this legislation is curious. There was little demand for it in Scotland, and the primary impetus came from the adoption of the parallel legislation for England and Wales. Alex Fletcher, the Conservative Scottish education minister, pressed for similar legislation, stressing that the issue was not choice alone but also differentiation. "If parents are to have a real choice, it will also be important that the schools themselves should develop their own individual identity and ethos—and perhaps their own traditions and strengths in particular areas of the curriculum" (quoted in Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 30).

The Scottish professional associations were strongly opposed, urging amendments to preserve attendance areas, to allow school authorities to set limits on admissions, and to hold spaces open for students moving into an attendance area. These amendments were rejected.

> The whole impact of the Bill, and the balance that it sought to strike between the rights of individual parents and the collective responsibilities of education authorities, was fundamentally altered by the government's late deletion of the clause that would have allowed authorities to fix admission limits for their schools and to use those admission limits to justify refusing parents' requests. (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 37–50)

The Scottish education minister rejected this provision "when he realized that authorities could use it to restrict parents' ability to choose popular schools and force them to send their children to unpopular schools, artificially keeping such schools open instead of closing them" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 302). The Conservatives were not prepared to accept any "artificial" restrictions on the logic of the educational marketplace they hoped to create.

The new protections for parent choice came into effect in Scotland in February 1982. Although the 1946 legislation had acknowledged the role of parents in determining school selection, it had not stated this as a right over against the decisions of education authorities. "The idea that parents (to say nothing of children) might have been given rights as well as duties in respect of education was quite foreign to the spirit of the legislation and to the spirit of the times" (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 291).

The response to the newly defined right of parent choice indicated solid but not overwhelming support. In 1983–84, 8.9 percent of the students entering elementary and 8.1 percent of those entering secondary schools had requested an assignment other than their automatic one.

The Labour government in the Edinburgh area (Lothian) had taken a very restrictive attitude toward choice before the 1981 Act, seeking to require all children to attend their local elementary schools and the secondary schools to which those fed students. This practice has changed radically under the impact of the new legislation. In 1984, the local authorities—by now Conservative—decided not to attempt to protect undersubscribed schools, though limits have been imposed at popular schools to prevent overcrowding. Some fear exists that the operation of parent choice, over time, will recreate the two-tier system of secondary education that was abolished by the introduction of comprehensive schools in the 1960s (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 312–14).

In the Dundee area (Tayside), the Conservative government had always been flexible about allowing parent choice, though when this came into conflict with such planning and economy issues as closing schools and determining the capacity of new schools, parent preferences were given little weight.

Why Scottish Parents Choose a School

Studies have been made of the operation of parent choice in Scotland since the 1981 legislation, and of the parent motivations involved. One study, carried out by researchers at Edinburgh University, has been referred to here as "Adler, Petch, and Tweedie;" the other, by researchers at Glasgow University, as "Macbeth, Strachan, and Macauley." The two groups agreed that

> although both studies would include surveys of parents, the Edinburgh group would concentrate more upon national and regional political facets related to the legislation; upon socio-legal effects, especially concerned with appeals . . .; and upon patterns of movements between schools. The Glasgow study, which is also concerned with movements between schools and (in broad outline) legal issues, would focus more on the effects upon school and families, upon reasons for choice and . . . upon educational practices and concepts. (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 3)

The first question about any choice plan is the extent to which significant differences exist among schools. Although Scottish education, as noted above, has a long commitment to common schools and adopted the comprehensive model of secondary school organization in the 1960s, there can be considerable variation among schools.

> In the Scottish system of curricular control, facilities and staffing are education authority responsibilities [the number of LEAs was reduced in 1975 from 35 to 12] and are therefore decentralized to the regional level; what is taught and how it is taught are usually left to schools and individual teachers, but with advice from central and local sources. At middle and upper secondary levels, the Examination Board is a force towards conformity *within* subjects, but . . . there is variation between schools in regard to what subjects are on offer as well as in teaching methods. (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 5)

Such differences "stem from decisions made at the school level and, in the absence of a locally-elected body concerned with each individual school [since education authorities are regional], there is no system of neighborhood accountability for these decisions" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 333).

As an important stage in the implementation of the 1981 Act, schools were required to develop handbooks that gave basic facts and information about educational goals. To some extent, preparation of these handbooks helped school staff to clarify what was distinctive about their approach to education, but the researchers who reviewed them were struck with the impersonal tone and use of wordy jargon designed to keep parents in their place: "If a pupil has special dietary requirements provision can be ensured as long as the school is informed timeously" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay, 89–105).

The number of requests for out-of-district assignments doubled from 10,456 in 1981–82 to 20,795 in 1984–85, more than half of them for elementary schools. During this period 97.4 percent of the requests for elementary schools were granted at some stage in the process, as were 93.8 percent of those for secondary schools. Most of the requests (55.2 percent of elementary and 68.7 percent of secondary) were for the entry-level class, but the balance were for transfers at stages when students would not normally be entering an elementary or secondary school (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 307–8).

The rate of requests was significantly higher in urban areas, where more choices were available, than in rural areas; the request rate was very low in the Highlands and the Shetland and Orkney Islands.

The two research projects found that school requests were made by parents of all social classes (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 309). Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay found, in one sample, that "even in the suburban area manual workers were relatively more represented among those making placing requests (37%) than their presence in the population (20%) would lead us to expect" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 302, 334).

Parents surveyed were well informed of their rights; this included 86 percent of those who did *not* request a specific assignment: "The primary reason (60 percent) given by parents requesting an elementary level assignment was avoidance of their local school, often because of the perceived roughness of its students, and preference of another for safety and school climate reasons. The educational program offered was to some extent a secondary consideration (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 335, 299).

At the secondary level 70 percent of the requests were motivated by desire to avoid the assigned school and diffuse perceptions that the child would be happier at the school selected. Educational or school-based reasons *were* given by nearly half of the parents of secondary students (43 percent at the elementary level).

> Elements associated with "traditional" schools (discipline, uniform, streaming, "the basics", not open-plan, traditional methods and ethos) when aggregated accounted for 10.1% of reasons given. By contrast, an aggregation of opposites to these, sometimes associated with "progressive education" (relaxed discipline, no uniform, "modern" methods and ethos open-plan, mixed ability classes) represented only 1.1% of school-based reasons. . . . A structured environment, academic emphasis and firm discipline are sought by many parents, especially at secondary level. (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 306)

For parents choosing in this study, "the school was not seen as providing an adequate counter-attack to peer group culture" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 279), while the authors of the other study concluded "that the majority of parents have in mind a broad general agenda in selecting a secondary school for their child and are as much if not more concerned with social considerations than with educational ones" (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 309–10).

This emphasis on issues of school climate rather than of pedagogy does not mean, according to the researchers, that those headteachers are correct who asserted that parents were not well-enough informed to make sound choices among schools. Indeed,

> many parents seemed to have quite clear pictures of the working ethos of a school. Parents repeatedly saw both the happiness and the educational success of the child as being related to the stability and atmosphere of the school, though they varied in the extent to which they saw the nature of the school's intake [of students] or the actions taken by staff to be the main determinant of that working environment. In some instances parents had access to information (e.g. about bullying and attitudes of local peer groups) which may have led some parents to have been *better* informed than some teachers. (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 124)

Although some headteachers reported that motivations of class and social snobbery affected parents in requesting to leave their schools, the responses from parents did not support this view. The researchers speculate that "it may be that they were articulating reasons which they and their staff hoped were predominant," and that possibly "what were believed by staff to be reasons of snobbery were seen by parents as protective, indeed educational reasons" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 130).

Effects of Parents' Choices

It might be expected from this analysis (and from common sense), that most of the movement in urban areas would be from schools in lower income areas to schools in adjacent middle-income areas. This pattern did show itself to some extent in Edinburgh, though in Dundee "the pattern of movements is almost entirely within areas that are homogeneous with respect to housing tenure and social class." The exception that conforms to the original expectation are those transfers between noncontiguous schools. In Edinburgh 83 percent of the requests and in Dundee 85 percent were to contiguous schools (Raab and Adler 1987, 164–71).

In Dundee and Edinburgh certain schools experienced sharp gains or losses in enrollment: 2 out of 38 elementary schools in Dundee lost more than half their attendance area population, while 7 gained more than half of their entering class from outside their attendance areas. There were very few pairs of schools between which students moved in both directions. The viability of some schools with heavy losses is now in question. "Overall, the advantages for some children of attending larger secondary schools with more balanced intakes and higher staying-on rates appear to have imposed substantial costs on other children whose curricular choices and wider educational opportunities have been further restricted" (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 312).

In other words, an unrestricted system of choice provides advantages to those who make choices and disadvantages to those who do not. Judging this trade-off from an equity perspective is difficult. One line of argument would stress that at least some students are saved from a bad education by the opportunity to choose a school in a middle-class area; as Scottish Education Minister Alex Fletcher argued in launching the choice program in Scotland, "Some schools in deprived areas are battling against the odds despite all the public money that was poured into their area, and the effect on the children is that it locks them into the one social strata," while mandatory assignment based on strict attendance districts "effectively confines disadvantaged children to the deprived areas in which they live" (quoted in Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 31–32).

The argument on the other side, of course, is that only children of the more ambitious and upwardly mobile working-class parents are likely to benefit from a choice program, and that the result is to leave the education for those students who remain behind even more dismal.

Does parent choice in Scotland actually promote social integration (as the Conservatives claimed that it would) by allowing poor children to escape their inner-city schools? In the case of one school studied, it did appear that the "influx of [urban] pupils was seen as being 'responsible' for the changing ethos of the school providing it with a more comprehensive spread in terms of socio-economic status and ability, and thus more like the other comprehensive schools in the city, that these parents were to some extent seeking to avoid" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 286).

The overall study found that those living in public housing did receive some benefits from the new system of choice: "Our evidence does seem to support the argument that the legislation has had an egalitarian effect by providing for council tenants that element of school choice which had largely been the preserve of house-buyers" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 302).

Indeed, "for those who cannot choose [a] school through house purchase or private schooling the legislation does seem to have provided an attainable mode of choice" (Macbeth, Strachan, and Macaulay 1986, 334). Even though only a minority may take advantage of this opportunity, it reflects a significant reconceptualization of the relationship of parents and government in education:

> From 1945 onwards, it has been assumed that the interests of the individual coincided with those of the [local education] authority, thus the best way of promoting an individual's rights was to improve the provision of education. Now, for the first time, the interests of the individual and the concerns of the authority were seen, at least in some respects, to conflict and the individual was seen to be in need of protection from the authority. (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 305)

On the other hand, the same researchers conclude that

> the 1981 Act has not achieved the right balance between the rights of individual parents and the collective duties of education authorities. . . . [They should be] given more powers to control admissions to school, subject to effective safeguards, which would ensure that these powers are used responsibly to prevent parental choice from prejudicing equality of educational opportunity or the duty placed on education authorities to promote "adequate and efficient education" for all. (Adler, Petch, and Tweedie 1987, 322)

Northern Ireland

There were 183,622 students in the publicly funded "voluntary" (Catholic) sector of education in Northern Ireland in 1987–88, 153,898 in the "controlled" (Protestant) schools operated by local authorities, 1,335 in religiously integrated schools and 264 in fundamentalist Protestant schools; these last have been founded since 1979 and their number is growing. Only 801 students attended "independent" (private) schools, which receive no public funding (TES, September 4, 1987).

Ongoing communal strife—and declining enrollments—have led to efforts for integration of Catholics and Protestants, mostly through seeking to attenuate the Protestant character of "controlled" schools. The first school established explicitly to be religiously integrated, Lagan College in Belfast, dates only from 1981, and three more opened in

1985. Seven integrated schools now enroll about 1,500 or half of one percent of the province's pupils, but they encounter considerable resistance as a threat to existing Catholic and Protestant schools. In particular, teachers in the "controlled" schools have insisted that these are nonsectarian rather than Protestant, and that there is therefore no basis for establishing integrated schools in competition with them for students (*TES*, December 4, May 8, 1987; May 20, 1988).

In a 1988 policy paper setting forth proposals for reform, the Department of Education for Northern Ireland declared the government's intention

> - to continue to apply the principle that, as far as possible, children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents;
> - to continue to support programmes and activities which bring together children from the two traditions in the interests of fostering greater tolerance and mutual understanding; and
> - to act positively to facilitate the development of integrated education where there is sufficient parental demand to support a viable school. (*Education in Northern Ireland* 1988, 6)

Consistent with the Education Act of 1988 (which applies to England and Wales), the government proposed for Northern Ireland that "no limit would be placed on the enrolment at any primary or secondary school other than that determined by the physical capacity of its premises" (*Education in Northern Ireland* 1988, 13). Thus the more popular schools could draw pupils from those less popular without any limitations designed to protect the ineffective.

In addition, the government proposed a system permitting schools to opt out of their local school systems and to receive funding directly from the central education authority. A significant variation for Northern Ireland would create a second category of schools "where they were also able to demonstrate a strong commitment to and progress towards full integration between Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils, they would be known as "grant-maintained integrated schools" (*Education in Northern Ireland* 1988, 19).

Such schools would have to show an enrollment in which at least 20 percent to 25 percent of the pupils were of the less represented religious group. Government funding would be based upon that received by other schools locally, adjusted to take into account any special needs of the pupil population; the school would have "discretion to vary expenditure on all elements within its budget."

The intention in creating this new category of directly funded schools is to overcome the resistance of some local education authorities and the Catholic Church to integration-directed efforts by promising such schools direct funding from provincial authorities.

Conclusions

Parent choice of schools as a theme of policy debate has a varying resonance in western nations whose educational and political systems are otherwise rather similar. In Great Britain the issue of religious rights of conscience with respect to schooling is of much less significance than in several other nations where this has been a matter of intense debate.

This observation is not to suggest that religious controversy has played no part in the development of the educational systems, particularly that of England. Endless debate and polemic were devoted to the religious content and the denominational sponsorship of schools through the 19th century and—with diminishing intensity—up to World War II. These questions mattered greatly to the churches and, presumably, to many parents and teachers.

What was lacking in Great Britain in contrast with simultaneous developments in France or Prussia, however, was a sense that the State itself had an agenda of moral and civic education to impose on the rising generation through a system of schooling that it sought to dominate directly. The State did not, in Great Britain, see itself as the rival of the Church, nor did it seek to use popular schooling to create cultural uniformity or civic loyalty.

Paradoxically, the very fact that religious differences have not threatened to divide Great Britain and that no church has seemed a stronghold of obscurantism and reaction has made it largely unproblematic to accommodate the mild religious diversity that exists within a pluralistic educational system. As the Roman Catholic population grew through immigration from Ireland, its educational demands were fitted smoothly within the existing structures and without the intense controversies that developed around Catholic schooling in the United States.

The concerns of British education reformers have been primarily with social class and with schooling as a means or a barrier to opportunity. In the spirit of unity that prevailed during World War II it seemed possible to reform the system in a way that would make education a powerful instrument to lessen social barriers. While diversity was of continuing importance, a government policy paper argued, it "must not impair the social unity within the educational system which will open the way to a more closely knit society and give us strength to face the tasks ahead" (in Maclure 1986, 206).

While this chapter is not concerned with the debates over the merits of comprehensive secondary schools, these debates serve as essential background to the controversy over parent choice. In Great Britain as in France, Germany, Belgium, Australia, and elsewhere, many parents prefer schools that are academically selective or in some other way not comprehensive, and support choice policies as a means of acting upon their preferences.

This context explains something that is puzzling from an American perspective, that parent choice of schools should be a major policy issue in British education today even though *choice on religious grounds* has long been built into the structure of the system.

For some British commentators, mostly on the Left, the government policy of promoting parent choice is no more than a transparent pretext for reversing the progress in recent decades toward social equality. The motivations are far more complex than that explanation would suggest, however, and the resistance of most educators cannot be explained by their commitment to the interests of working-class and immigrant children.

Some signs suggest that the Conservative program to promote parent choice—though opposed by most educators and only moderately supported by parents—has managed to change the terms of education reform efforts in Great Britain, and more so than has yet occurred in the United States. The National Union of Teachers, for example, has begun to commission opinion polls to determine what parents are looking for in schools, and how satisfied they are with what is now provided. Shifting power from local education authorities to schools and parents, one union spokesman conceded, "could lead to higher standards and an improvement in the education service" (*TES*, January 29, 1988).

Others are convinced that *only* such a fundamental structural change can bring real educational reform.

Canada

arental Choice in anadian Education

The cultural similarities between Canada and the United States can conceal significant differences. One of these has to do with the scope permitted in Canada for parent choice of schools. hough the curricular content of Canadian education is, in many pects, similar to that of education in the United States, differences st in structure and governance leading to far greater diversity and ent choice in Canada.

In the United States, efforts to give a religious flavor to a public hool or to extend public funding to schools not operated by ernment are, in most cases, struck down on the basis of the deral Constitution or of even stricter State constitutions. The ndamental national laws in Canada, by contrast, give many par- s a right to denominational public schools and pose no impedi- ent to funding of private schools; indeed, one of the few constitu- nal responsibilities of the Federal government in education is to sure that this right is respected by the Provinces.

Canada, like the United States, has always faced the challenge of egrating immigrants into the national life, and thus of determin- g how to respond to their linguistic and cultural diversity. Histori- lly, Canadian educational policy has been as assimilationist toward migrants as that in the United States, but in recent years an effort s been made to find a place for the immigrant cultures and nguages in the Canadian "mosaic."

Public funds are now made available for the maintenance of ritage languages, those spoken by immigrant and indigenous nguage minority groups, either within public school programs or rough programs sponsored by community organizations. This nce toward language contrasts with the United States, where ingual education is justified almost exclusively as an effective way promote the transition to successful academic work in English. adoption in Canada, in 1972, of the Charter of Rights and

Freedoms has further complicated this question by giving a guaranteed status to the language and religious rights of minorities. The Canadian educational system, already far more diverse than that in the United States, is now further adjusting to accommodate these newly extended rights.

Support for linguistic diversity in Canadian education probably grows out of the compromises reached to resolve political conflict over the role of French beyond the borders of the Province of Quebec. As Provinces began to make mother-tongue schooling available to their French minorities, other (sometimes locally more numerous) language minorities naturally sought similar support in maintaining their languages and cultures.

On the other hand, the emphasis on Canada as a "multicultural" nation was not welcomed by those Francophone leaders for whom it suggested a downgrading of French, and Quebec declined to endorse the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because of its implications for the province's treatment of its own language minority groups, including those speaking English (Mallea 1984, 224).

This outline of the varieties of Canadian education should not suggest, therefore, that no tensions exist around educational diversity and parent choice in Canada; to the contrary, conflict over the control and content of education is inevitable in such a diverse society.

> As the responsible authority in education, the state necessarily has concern about quality, equity, and an informed citizenry. At the extreme end of the continuum, state monopoly could mean general uniformity and homogeneity of schooling, such as is found in most totalitarian states. The school, as a representative of the parents of the children, may strive to embody other values as well, such as those of certain religious convictions, the maintenance of a mother tongue, and the expression of the culture of a group. This involves an element of choice in contrast to a state controlled system. This, then, at the other end of the continuum promotes diversity. Unavoidable, therefore, is a tension between state and school forces, the one tending towards homogeneity, the other towards diversity. (Bergen 1986c, 9)

This tension is present in education in the United States as well, and notably in recent efforts to increase the autonomy of individual schools as a means to enhance teacher professionalism and instructional effectiveness. Our periodic controversies over state regulation of private religious schools is another expression of the same dilemma. In every pluralistic democracy, indeed, the question must be confronted: how should the state carry out its responsibility to ensure that the common educational objectives of the society—including universal schooling and what it means for individual opportunity—are met without intruding upon the distinctive quality of any effective school or the fundamental rights of parents?

Giving a synopsis of parent choice of schools in Canada is difficult because the situation and policies differ widely among Provinces—much more than among States in the United States—and are the result of political compromises at the provincial level rather than of the application of nationwide legal principles. The Canadian situation is also complicated by uneasy relations between the French-speaking and English-speaking communities, with new immigrants making up a third, very diverse, group. An account (brief or extended, depending upon the complexity of the situation) of each Province and Territory will thus be necessary.

In recent decades, Canadian life has experienced three basic shifts that have had an impact on the demand for and provision of parent choice in education.

The first has been the increased secularization of society and thus of public schools. The type of religious motivation for seeking a private school has changed. Before World War II, a Jewish or a secularized family might have turned to a private school as an alternative to the explicitly Christian character of the public schools; now it is often parents of strong Protestant convictions who choose or help to found a private school that meets the family's desire for an education based upon a religious world view that the public schools no longer offer (Bergen 1981b, 7). The more alien the surrounding culture becomes, the more urgent such an education seems to many parents.

The second shift has been from a bare tolerance of minority languages to a strong assertion of language rights. The lead in this new language militancy has been taken by French-speaking leaders, but other groups are growing increasingly active in pressing for accommodations of their languages and cultures. The response of the educational system has increased the diversity of Canadian education: in the same community, some students may be studying math or social studies in English, others in French, and others in Ukrainian; yet others may speak English at home but do their schoolwork in French as a form of enrichment chosen by their parents. These variations on a common education reflect choices made by parents and supported by the educational system.

The third shift has been toward an increased emphasis upon human rights as they apply to education, with the courts placed more and more in the position of defending the rights of individuals and of identifiable groups. Since Canadian law is not restrained by a doctrine of strict separation of Church and State, the accommodations ordered by the courts under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms could go further than would be likely in the United States. After all, "the major factor preventing the funding of private schools in the United States is the entrenched separation of church and state. There is no such prohibition in Canada" (Holmes 1985, 113).

The Charter includes a provision that it "shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians," and thus seems to recognize diversity as a fundamental principle of Canadian life. This recognition, in turn, implies choice in an area as sensitive as education, since in a modern society culture involves individual and family decisions about identity and how it will be expressed. Schooling must thus make room for different degrees of commitment to the cultural heritages present in the society.

Before considering the various ways in which the Canadian Provinces have accommodated the desires of parents, one ought to ask who wants choice and what their particular concerns are. In the Canadian context, five different constituencies for choice can be distinguished, keeping in mind that they overlap to some extent. These constituencies are: Catholics, non-Catholic religious groups, speakers of French or of English in areas where the other language predominates, speakers of other minority languages, and those parents who seek some form of alternative schooling, whether elite or pedagogically distinctive. Each of these groups has been accommodated in rather different ways. A sixth group, not discussed further in this study, are parents of handicapped children, a group whose needs, historically, were often met only in private schools—with public funding subsidy—since public schools were not required to provide for them (Bergen 1981b, 8).

Roman Catholics

The first, and historically most significant, group of parents seeking an alternative to the common public school are Roman Catholics. To a substantial extent, the desire for a Catholic education has been accommodated within the structure of public education. This accommodation is undoubtedly the major reason that the proportion of Canadian students in *private* schools (around 4 percent) is low in comparison with the United States (around 10 percent) and other democracies.

The original European settlers of Canada were French, and French Canada had a tradition of Church responsibility for education, with the support of civil authorities. From the beginning of British rule in Canada, in the 1760s, an effort was made to win the loyalty of the predominantly French population by accommodating their Catholic faith and practice. When, at the time of the American Revolution, many Loyalists swelled the English-speaking population of Canada, conflict developed between the two communities, and the British government intervened to provide protections for the institutions and cultural integrity of each. Upper Canada (now Ontario) was set off from the French-dominated Lower Canada (Quebec). The Catholic Church was left in control of education in Quebec, and the government did not assert an educational mission for itself but limited its role to providing supplemental grants to schools organized by denominational or private initiative. "What is striking about the demands leading up to the Constitutional Act of 1791 is the absence of enlightenment ideologies as culturally shaping influences. No one appealed to the democratic doctrines of equality, liberty, inalienable right, or popular sovereignty; rather, both communities spoke of their historic rights and traditions" (Marshall 1985, 4).

The new political order established by the Act of Union in 1840 "introduced a common political order but without abolishing cultural diversity;" this unity "was not based on claims of cultural homogeneity or hegemony" but rather on "guaranteeing each community the right to its own faith, language, laws, customs, and institutions" (Marshall 1985, 4–5). In the Separate Schools Act of 1863, the schools serving the Catholic minority in Ontario were placed on an equal basis for public funding with the public "common" schools.

In 1867, the British Parliament enacted the British North America Act of 1867, uniting the four colonies of Upper Canada (Ontario), Lower Canada (Quebec), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in a Confederation. This "Constitution Act" gave the Provinces exclusive authority to make laws about education, but provided that

> 1. Nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union;
>
> 2. All the Powers, Privileges, and Duties at the Union by Law conferred and imposed in Upper Canada on the Separate Schools and School Trustees of the Queen's Roman Catholic Subjects shall be and the same are hereby extended to the Dissentient Schools of the Queen's Protestant and Roman Catholic Subjects in Quebec;

> 3. Where in any Province a System of Separate or Dissentient Schools exists by Law at the Union or is thereafter established by the Legislature of the Province, an Appeal shall lie to the Governor General in Council [i.e., the federal authorities] from any Act or Decision of any Provincial Authority affecting any Right or Privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to Education.

These stipulations guaranteed the continuation of denominational schools in Quebec and Ontario, then, as now, the two largest Provinces, and applied to other Provinces where such schools already existed at the time they entered the Confederation. This arrangement had the effect of protecting the schools of religious minorities, Protestants in Quebec and Catholics in much of Canada, since Alberta and Saskatchewan adopted the provision for separate Catholic schools when they joined the Confederation in 1905.

The guarantee of public support was limited to the "common school" grades, though these have been gradually extended upward as the level of education in the population has risen: Ontario has until recently allowed Catholic schools through the 10th grade to be funded as "elementary" schools, and recently has included higher secondary grades in its funding provisions.

Canadian parlance usually distinguishes between "separate" or "dissentient" schools—essentially public schools with a denominational character, operated by local boards—and "private" or "independent" schools, which may also receive public funding though on the basis of a political decision and not as a matter of right.

Over time the Protestant separate schools outside Quebec have lost their denominational character and are simply the public schools of the majority, while separate Catholic schools continue in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although no Catholic separate schools are officially established in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, the distribution of the population is such that "most Catholic needs have been met within the public school districts due to the more or less homogeneous francophone Catholic settlement patterns" (Bergen 1981b). The schools in Newfoundland are organized entirely on a denominational basis.

There are also Catholic private schools, mostly in the Provinces without separate Catholic public school systems. Thus, in 1985–86, 15,120 students were in private Catholic schools in British Columbia, but only 100 in Alberta because of the separate Catholic public school system that enrolled more than 17 percent of the student population there.

In one way or another, then, most Canadian parents who so choose are able to obtain a publicly subsidized Catholic education for their children, whether in a public or a private school.

Non-Catholic Religious Groups

The educational concerns of religious groups other than Catholics (and mainstream Protestants) have been met largely through their own efforts until recent years, when some movement has occurred toward providing public support for schools established by them. While there are (loosely) Protestant public schools in Quebec, and the public schools in several other provinces have a Protestant heritage, no recognized right exists for individual denominations to receive public support for "separate" public schools.

Table 4 provides, for selected provinces and for Canada as a whole, an estimate of the sources of revenues to private schools.

In Newfoundland, which did not join the Confederation until 1949, there was a long tradition of education organized on a denominational basis, and thus Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist schools are provided full funding. Elsewhere, education authorities have not been quick to extend the support available to Catholic schools to those of other religious groups. Quebec has provided such support for decades (in part because the public schools did not always include secondary grades), and Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia have begun to provide such assistance.

Despite the lack of guarantees in constitutional law, the number of private schools increased rapidly in Ontario and British Columbia

Table 4.—Private school revenues in selected provinces, by source: Canada, 1982–83

	Source of revenues				Provincial funds to private education	Pupils in private schools
	Local boards	Province	Tuition	Other		
			Percent			
Canada	2.1	30.9	50.3	16.8	1.6	4.6
Quebec	0.2	54.9	39.0	5.9	3.5	7.9
Ontario	5.3	1.7	66.5	26.5	0.1	4.4
Alberta	1.1	35.3	39.3	24.3	1.0	1.9
British Columbia	0.1	29.3	50.7	19.9	1.2	5.3

NOTE.—Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: Analysis by John J. Bergen, private communication, 1988.

during the postwar decades. Bergen suggests that this was related to developments in the wider society; as they have become secularized, public schools "no longer reflect a 'Christian' or 'Christian Protestant' ethos. Those members of society who found the public schools of three or four decades ago sufficiently "Christian" to provide the kind of educational environment they wanted for their children, no longer find such to be the case. Consequently, in recent years there has been a stronger interest in private schools among more conservative denominations" (Bergen 1981a, 3).

The postwar immigrants from the Netherlands, in particular, brought with them a tradition of denominational schooling that led to the founding of the first "Christian Reformed" school in 1945. By 1985–86, more than 19,000 students were attending schools in the Reformed tradition.

Another group with a strong commitment to schooling informed by their religious views are the Hutterites, an extremely conservative Anabaptist church related to the Mennonites. Because they live in homogeneous farming colonies, the Hutterites have been able to make use of their local public schools, supplemented by language and religion instruction before or after school. Local authorities have been willing to accommodate the Hutterite practice of recognizing 15-year-olds as members of the adult community; they are excused from school on the basis of receiving training as apprentices through their responsibilities in the Hutterite community (Bergen 1982a, 326; Bergen 1978c, 3).

Much recent controversy has centered around the Holdeman group of Mennonites, who came into conflict with provincial authorities in Alberta in the 1970s when they withdrew their children from the public schools and began to educate them in unauthorized schools of their own. One of the leaders of this group wrote to the Premier of Alberta that

> We definitely feel that we have a culture and a way of life to preserve for our children and that the trends in our greater society are not conducive for this. We plan to give our children a curriculum that will foster self-discipline rather than permissiveness; respect for authority rather than disrespect; interdependence rather than independence; consideration for the rights of others rather than "I'll do my own thing"; and respect for God, his creation, and his institutions. (quoted in Bergen 1978b, 14)

The growth of demand for private schooling in Canada (and in the United States) is surely related to such concerns to shield children from what are seen as the destructive aspects of modernity. Altogether, some 5,600 Canadian students attend Mennonite private schools, nearly 1,000 attend Pentecostal schools, and more than 3,000 attend Adventist schools.

Another 14,000 Canadian students attend Jewish schools, mostly in Ontario (7,500) and Quebec (5,000), where public schools were long distinctively Catholic or Protestant. In Edmonton, Alberta, in the 1970s, a private Hebrew school was accepted into the public system as an alternative school, with control of program and hiring remaining with the former trustees, but this was an unusual arrangement (table 5).

Altogether, at least 234,260 students were attending 1,300 private schools in Canada in 1985–86, up from 188,350 attending 800 schools a decade earlier. Some 40,000 (or 17 percent) of these students attended Catholic schools. This very low proportion by the standard of other countries is to be explained by the ample provision for "public" Catholic schools in Canada.

Table 5.—Number of students enrolled in private schools in selected Provinces, by Province and school affiliation: Canada, 1985–86

Affiliation	Canada	Ontario	Manitoba	Alberta	British Columbia
Total	234,260	76,320	9,520	13,090	33,560
Adventist	3,270	1,150	80	920	840
Amish	120	120	0	0	0
Anglican	5,330	5,270	60	0	0
Baptist	2,590	1,390	130	300	40
Brethren	190	190	0	0	0
Calvinist/ Reformed	19,280	11,190	610	2,850	4,520
Jewish	14,198	7,500	910	340	340
Lutheran	1,170	10	0	530	110
Mennonite	5,620	2,650	1,610	230	750
Pentecostal	870	50	10	0	710
Roman Catholic	39,890	20,470	3,370	100	15,120
Ukrainian Catholic	280	230	50	0	0
Nonsectarian	45,970	21,400	2,650	7,550	11,130
Not reported	99,410*	3,690	300	0	0

* No break-down for 95,310 students in Quebec.

NOTE.—Students in Provinces not listed here are included in totals.

SOURCE: Data developed by John J. Bergen, private communication, 1988.

French- and English-Speaking Minorities

While in the 19th century the interests and the cultural integrity of the two founding communities of Canada were largely expressed in terms of Catholic-Protestant tensions and political accommodations, language issues have divided them in recent decades. The language division was always present, of course, but the use of French was preserved within the essentially rural Catholic community of Quebec, and the hegemony of English elsewhere—even in urban business circles in Quebec—was unchallenged. As Francophone leader Henri Bourassa observed, French-speaking Canadians, like Canadian Indians, could exercise their treaty rights only so long as they remained on the reservation in Quebec (Mallea 1984, 229).

Distinctions based on language have acquired increased significance in recent decades, as the demands of French speakers have been asserted with increasing force, and postwar immigration has changed the makeup of the population. Discussions distinguish among three types of "minorities": the official minorities, that is, English speakers in Quebec and French speakers elsewhere; the native Inuit and Indians (about 2 percent of the total); and the new immigrant groups. Canadians of British and Irish background have declined from 60 percent at the end of the last century to 40 percent at present, French-speaking Canadians have maintained a 30 percent population share, and those of other backgrounds have increased from 10 to 30 percent of the total (table 6) (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 1987, 167).

The growth of industry in Quebec led to an increase in that Province's English-speaking population, while Francophones sought economic opportunities in other parts of Canada. In 1981, the "official" minorities included 706,115 English speakers in Quebec, or 11 percent of that Province's population, and more than 942,085 French speakers in other provinces, ranging from 33.6 percent of the population of New Brunswick to 0.5 percent of that of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As a result of intense political conflict in the 1960s, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms sought to guarantee the right of instruction in French or English anywhere in Canada, except where the numbers of potential students are too small to support a class, as determined locally. The Federal Government is deeply involved in promoting programs for "official" language minority students, which, in practice, means French-speaking students outside Quebec. Many French-speaking parents and community advocates demand separate schools in which all instruction would be in French, with English as a second language, rather than for bilingual schools in

Table 6.—Population, by mother tongue and Province: Canada, 1981

Province	Total	English	French	Other
		Percent		
Total	100	61	26	13
		Number		
Total	24,343,180	14,918,455	6,249,095	3,175,630
British Columbia	2,744,465	2,249,310	45,615	449,540
Alberta	2,237,725	1,810,545	62,145	365,035
Saskatchewan	968,310	770,815	25,535	171,960
Manitoba	1,026,240	735,920	52,560	237,760
Ontario	8,625,105	6,678,770	475,605	1,470,730
Quebec	6,438,400	706,115	5,307,010	425,275
New Brunswick	696,405	453,310	234,030	9,065
Nova Scotia	847,440	793,165	36,030	18,245
Prince Edward Island	122,505	115,045	6,080	1,380
Newfoundland and Labrador	567,680	560,460	2,655	4,565
Yukon	23,155	20,245	580	2,330
Northwest Territories	45,745	24,755	1,240	19,750

SOURCE: Council of Ministers of Education, 1985.

which all students would study parttime in each language. This concern reflects the fear that French will simply be overwhelmed by the cultural preponderance of English outside of Quebec and in the North American media generally.

Because the entire nation, and its civil service, is now officially bilingual, an increasing number of middle-class English-speaking parents are seeking educational programs that will enable their children to develop advanced proficiency in French. In 1983–84, approximately 90,000 students from English-speaking homes were enrolled in French "immersion" programs in which virtually all of the instruction was in French (table 7). The interest is not reciprocated; a child from a French-speaking home in Quebec may not legally be enrolled in a program in which English is the primary language of instruction.

Language and religion are not easily separable in Canada. Some parents with little church connection select denominational schooling on the basis of the language associated with it. Thus, French-

Table 7.—Enrollment in K–12 language programs, by type of program and Province: Canada, 1983–84

Province	Minority language*	French immersion	French as second language
Total	281,564	89,174	1,988,664
British Columbia	1,163	9,914	168,348
Alberta	1,033	16,367	111,421
Saskatchewan	768	4,018	48,306
Manitoba	5,838	9,004	81,358
Ontario	92,025	19,810	721,390
Quebec	127,603	15,216	586,903**
New Brunswick	47,755	11,009	59,280
Nova Scotia	4,760	604	94,307
Prince Edward Island	516	1,914	39,047
Newfoundland and Labrador	103	970	72,703
Yukon	0	171	1,983
Northwest Territories	0	177	2,820

* French except in Quebec; there English.
** English as a 2nd language.

SOURCE: Council of Ministers of Education, 1985.

speaking parents outside Quebec may find, in many Catholic schools, an education oriented toward their culture and even their language. Similarly, much of the demand for Protestant schooling in Quebec—including among Italian Catholics—is a means of obtaining an education in English, which is perceived as an economic and social advantage.

Other Language Minorities

While French-English tensions have attracted the most attention, the heavy postwar immigration from Europe and Asia has created a significant number of new language minorities (Table 6). Several school systems in the Toronto area have enrollments more than 50 percent non-English-speaking, while 40 percent of the Vancouver enrollment is made up of language minority students (Cummins 1984, 81). French speakers are outnumbered by German speakers and also by Ukrainian speakers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, while the proportion of the total population belonging to a "non-official" language minority group (not necessarily speaking it as their mother tongue) reaches 51.8 percent in Saskatchewan, 49.3 percent in Manitoba, 47.4 percent in Alberta, 37.7 percent in British Columbia, and 31 percent in Ontario (Anglejan 1981, 92f).

Research suggests that some of these immigrant groups—Greeks, Italians, Chinese, Ukrainians—are more concerned to maintain their language than are the Dutch and Scandinavian groups, perhaps because the latter find assimilation into Canadian society in general easier (Cummins 1984, 86). For some parents, then, an important aspect of educational choice is the opportunity it offers for retention of a native language other than English or French. Federal policy establishes these two as the official languages of Canada, but endorses multiculturalism as well and encourages, with funding, efforts to promote it. In 1984–85, for example, the government's Cultural Enrichment Program awarded nearly $3.5 million (Canadian) to the heritage language and culture programs operating outside of the public education system; some 120,000 students participated in approximately 7,000 classes. Table 8 shows the number and distribution of supplemental language and culture programs that received such funding in 1984–85, in selected Provinces. Of the funds, 51 percent went to supplemental schools in Ontario, 16.4 percent to Quebec, 10.6 percent to British Columbia, 9.7 percent to Manitoba, and 8 percent to Alberta. Manitoba is not shown separately, but there were 86 German and 23 Ukrainian programs in that Province (table 8).

Elite and Alternative Schools

Toronto became celebrated in the 1960s as home to a vigorous alternative school movement, which extended its influence to the United States as well through the quarterly *This Magazine Is About Schools*. A number of Canadian cities continue to include alternative schools within their public systems.

Very different pedagogical ambitions characterize some 60 elite private college preparatory schools grouped in the Canadian Association of Independent Schools.

Although these schools represent two additional options for Canadian parents, such schools are of types familiar elsewhere and will not be discussed further.

The Varied Forms of Accommodation

Generalizations about choice in Canadian education are difficult, since the 1867 Act stated that "in and for each Province the Legisla-

Table 8.—Supplemental schools with Federal funds in selected Provinces, by Province and language: Canada, 1984–88

Language	Quebec	Ontario	Alberta	British Columbia	Canada
Total	186	685	115	174	1,421
Arabic	5	14	7	1	36
Armenian	5	8	0	1	14
Bengali	2	0	1	0	4
Chinese	6	46	18	40	122
Croatian	1	17	3	3	25
Czech	0	0	1	4	5
Danish	0	0	0	0	3
Dutch	0	11	0	0	11
Estonian	1	3	0	1	5
Finnish	0	11	0	0	11
German	9	36	11	11	166
Greek	64	79	4	20	177
Gujarati	1	9	0	0	12
Haitian	1	0	0	0	1
Hebrew	29	26	7	7	86
Hebrew & Yiddish	0	59	1	1	67
Hindi	2	9	3	0	16
Hmong	0	1	0	0	1
Hungarian	1	8	3	0	13
Icelandic	0	0	0	0	1
Igbo	0	1	0	0	1
Irish	0	0	0	0	3
Italian	31	130	2	20	190
Japanese	2	7	1	9	20
Khmer	1	1	0	0	2
Konkani	0	1	0	0	1
Korean	3	6	3	1	16
Laotian	0	3	0	3	10
Latvian	2	8	0	0	10
Lithuanian	0	4	1	0	5
Malayalam	1	2	0	0	7
Maltese	0	2	0	0	2
Marathi	0	2	0	0	2
Norwegian	0	1	0	1	3
Persian	1	2	0	1	4
Pilipino	2	5	3	0	12

Table 8.—Supplemental schools with Federal funds in selected Provinces, by Province and language: Canada, 1984–88—Continued

Language	Quebec	Ontario	Alberta	British Columbia	Canada
Polish	0	28	5	1	39
Portuguese	5	26	3	6	40
Punjabi	0	7	0	11	25
Russian	1	1	0	17	19
Sanskrit	0	1	0	0	1
Scots	0	0	0	0	3
Serbian	1	4	0	0	6
Sinhalese	0	0	1	0	1
Slovak	0	2	0	0	2
Slovenian	0	6	1	0	8
Spanish	5	15	4	6	37
Swahili	0	0	1	0	1
Swedish	0	2	1	1	5
Taiwanese	0	1	0	0	1
Tamil	0	0	1	0	1
Tamil & Telugu	0	1	0	0	1
Tibetan	0	2	2	0	4
Tigrinya	0	0	1	0	1
Turkish	1	1	1	0	3
Ukrainian	3	49	19	6	117
Urdu	0	3	1	0	6
Vietnamese	0	2	4	1	11
Welsh	0	0	0	0	1
multicultural	0	12	1	1	14
Black culture	0	10	0	0	10

NOTE.—Schools in Provinces not listed here are also included in totals.

SOURCE: *Federal Government Initiatives*, 1987.

ture may exclusively make Laws in relation to education." The policies of the various Provinces differ, for historical and other reasons.

Newfoundland

Developments in Newfoundland are in many respects atypical; the province joined Canada only recently, in 1949. Its early history was marked by the decision of the British government that Newfoundland would be a fishing station where settlement would not be encouraged and thus local government would not be necessary. When fishermen and their families settled anyway, the structure of local communities was strongly shaped by the churches in the absence of other institutions. As a result, the Education Act of 1874 divided public supplemental funding among the Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists, and each community supported its own schools.

Education continues to be organized officially on a denominational basis, with the provincial government paying about 95 percent of the operating costs of schools. This arrangement is anchored in the 1949 "Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada," which continued the system that had operated since 1874. This provides that "the Legislature will not have authority to make laws prejudicially affecting any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools . . . and out of public funds of the Province of Newfoundland, provided for education, (a) all such schools shall receive their share of such funds in accordance with scales determined on a non-discriminatory basis from time to time by the Legislature."

No official preference exists, in Newfoundland, for confessionally neutral schools on the basis of the "common school" ideology so prevalent in Western nations (see Glenn 1988). In fact, however, the consolidation of local school districts in recent decades has led to a substantial degree of amalgamation of student bodies and to a reduced denominational character to schooling.

In 1969, the Anglican (Episcopal) Church, United Church, and Salvation Army, later joined by the Presbyterian Church, entered into an agreement relinquishing the right to operate their own separate schools; thus general public "integrated" schools evolved, and these have become largely secularized. The Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal Assemblies and Seventh Day Adventist Church continue to make use of the right to operate their own "public" schools.

Private schools (as distinguished from these denominational public schools) do not receive government funding, but they are subject to approval and inspection by the Provincial minister of education.

The law does not require instruction of French speakers through their native language, but school boards are free to provide it. Five of the 35 school jurisdictions provided French-language classes in 1981–82 for 127 students in kindergarten through 10th grade.

New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island

In these neighboring Provinces, in contrast with Newfoundland, "separate denominational schools were seen as socially divisive" and a system of common schools were considered the key to nation-building (Wilson and Lazerson 1982, 3). Thus, unlike Quebec and Ontario, these Provinces entered Confederation without a system of publicly established denominational schools, and this alternative did not acquire constitutional protection. Although there is thus no legal guarantee of public funding for denominational schools, informal arrangements exist in each case to provide curriculum materials and other assistance on a very limited scale to private schools.

Education in New Brunswick was primarily denominational until legislation adopted in 1871 compelled all residents to support a system of common schools; this produced strong opposition and litigation which did not succeed in establishing a right to confessional schooling. Local compromises and the distribution of population, however, gave schools in some areas a French Catholic flavor. Bergen suggests that such accommodations have made it unnecessary for Catholic schools to develop in the Atlantic Provinces.

Since 1967, consolidation of schools in the name of efficiency and expanded programs has reduced this denominational influence: "the Catholic schools have been undercut by bureaucratic, centralizing and secular pressures" (Marshall 1985, 7).

Since the late 1960s, New Brunswick has guaranteed to children from French-speaking and English-speaking homes the right to instruction in their own languages, and in 1969 the province became officially bilingual. The language of instruction of each school is that of the majority of the students, with other children (if there is no alternative for them) given supplemental instruction in their home language. Separate but parallel systems exist, with separate school boards based on the dominant language in each area. Under legislation adopted in 1981, the minister of education is obligated to establish a minority language school board in areas dominated by the other language, if 30 parents request it. In 1981–82, 48,614 students were enrolled in the French-language sector, with 15 school boards, and 100,803 in the English-language sector, with 26 school boards.

Prince Edward Island requires that school boards provide instruction in French on the request of parents representing at least 25 students enrolled in three consecutive grades. Two schools provide instruction primarily in French. Of five local school districts, one is French (operating a single K–12 school) and the others English.

In Nova Scotia, instruction of French speakers through their native language is not required, but school boards are free to provide it. Twenty-three out of 374 elementary schools offered (in 1981) instruction to some students in French and to others in English, as did 10 out of 107 secondary schools. Out of 40 local school boards, 2 are French.

Quebec

Private and church initiative supplied what education was available—and it was by no means universal—in the first centuries of settlement. As English-speaking Protestants settled in Quebec they organized their own schools as an alternative to the existing Catholic schools; thus in 1857, 3,000 students were enrolled in private Protestant schools in Montreal, and only 750 in the public schools (Bergen 1986c, 3).

The Education Act of 1841 set up a publicly funded Catholic system in Quebec and a publicly funded Protestant system in Ontario, but also made provision for the right of the religious minority in each case to have its own schools. This right was further guaranteed by the Constitution Act of 1867.

Quebec continues to operate all public schools on a denominational basis, with 213 Catholic and 31 Protestant school districts overlapping geographically. Generally members of all non-Catholic groups—Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and the nonreligious—enroll their children in the Protestant schools. The situation has been described as a "dual confessional public school system." The Supreme Court of Canada found, in a 1984 ruling, that Roman Catholics and Protestants had an absolute right, based on the British North America Act of 1867, to direct and control their denominational schools, and to receive funding to operate these schools.

Controversy arose around 1900 over how Jewish children should be classified, and it was decided that they would have a right to attend Protestant schools in Montreal and could be admitted to such schools in rural areas. In order to protect the confessional character of Protestant schools, however, it was held that Jews could not be appointed to the Protestant Board of School Commissioners.

Another controversy arose over whether a Jehovah's Witness was a Protestant, leading to a ruling that a Protestant was anyone who was a Christian and repudiated the authority of the Pope. In recent years, however, there has been a tendency to make a distinction between Catholics and all others, rather than to apply the "Protestant" label so indiscriminantly.

While secularization has largely removed the Protestant character of the predominant system in Ontario, the Catholic Church continues to have a strong influence on that in Quebec. Schools are run by committees to which both the Ministry of Education and the Catholic bishops appoint representatives. Since the Quebec Ministry of Education was established, the curricular autonomy of the denominational schools has been reduced, but not as much as intended by those who wanted to make them an instrument of Quebec nationalism.

In addition to the denominationally based public schools, there continue to be a large number of private schools in Quebec, most of them Catholic. This abundance has been explained by the tardiness of the provincial government in extending free public schooling to the end of high school; not until the 1960s was a public high school education available to all. Quebec's Private Education Act of 1968 recognizes several categories of private schools. Those considered to be "of public interest" receive per-pupil grants at about 85 percent of the rate of public schools, and may not charge additional tuition amounting to more than 50 percent of this grant. A second category of private schools are "recognized for grant purposes," and receive per pupil grants at around 60 percent; they may not charge more in additional tuition than the amount of the grant.

A third category of "schools under permit" receive no government support, though they are subject to approval by the minister of education.

Controversies have arisen in recent years over whether parents have a right to choose the language of instruction for their children. This issue was not an explicit consideration in the 1867 Act: "it was religion and education that aroused people's sentiment then, not language and education" (Wilson and Lazerson 1982, 9). As the English-speaking population of the Province grew and came to occupy leading positions in business life, the situation changed completely. Language came to be the significant "marker" and point of distinction, and religious considerations began to take second place.

In a small city in Quebec where numbers did not permit maintenance of a separate system for English-speaking Catholic students, Everett C. Hughes found in the late 1930s, they attended the Protestant school; language had come to be a more important factor than denomination.

> The Protestant school is generally called the "English school"; some English-speaking Catholics always so speak of it, with the obvious intent of emphasizing the school's and their own ethnic, rather than religious, affiliation. In fact, it is the school of the English Catholics, of the Jews, of the few families of French Protestants, of a few rather anglicized French Catholics, and of families resulting from marriages of English Protestants with French Catholics. The marginal people choose the legally Protestant, de facto English school. (Hughes 1963, 118)

As Mackey observes, "except in private schools or big cities, some French-speaking Protestants and some English-speaking Catholics had to choose between their language and their religion" (Mackey 1984, 160).

The problem was exacerbated after World War II, when an increasing number of European immigrants (notably Italians and Greeks) chose to identify with the English-speaking residents of Montreal. According to the 1971 census almost 18 percent of the population of Montreal had neither English nor French as their native tongue, as compared to 15 percent of English background and 67 percent of French background. A law adopted in 1969 gave parents the choice of language of instruction for their children, and the great majority used this to choose English. About half of the enrollment of Montreal's English Catholic schools, in 1973, was of Italian ancestry (18,000 as against 2,000 in French Catholic schools). "There was one segregated public city school system for English-speaking Protestants and another for French-speaking Catholics. This latter school system maintained English-speaking Catholic schools, in which were found the bulk of European immigrant children, all supported by public funds" (Mackey 1984, 163).

Other immigrant parents, though themselves Catholic, chose to send their children to Protestant schools in order to provide them with an education in English. Thus in 1971–72, 85 percent of the children of immigrants in Quebec were attending English-language schools, whether Protestant or Catholic. And in 1973–74, 35 percent of the "English" school population of Quebec was from homes where French or another non-English language was spoken (Mallea 1984, 233). The metropolitan Montreal area, in particular, seemed to be in the process of moving toward an English-speaking majority by the end of the century.

For political leaders of the French-speaking community, whose Parti Québécois came to power in provincial elections in 1976, this represented a highly threatening trend, part of an overall assault upon the integrity of the Québécois culture and "nationality." "The survival of the French language is of course a primary objective and raison d'être of the political culture of Quebec" (Mallea 1984, 225). The passage of a law, in 1974, limiting access to English-language schools to those children with a sufficient proficiency in English had been extensively evaded. Even more seriously, upwardly mobile French-speaking parents were transferring their children into English-language schools, especially at the secondary level, in an attempt to increase their job prospects in a continental—indeed, a world—economy to which English was the key.

In 1977 the new government, invoking its campaign slogan "Maître chez nous," adopted a Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) to regulate the use of language in all aspects of public life in Quebec. Efforts to promote bilingualism—gathering force at the national level in an effort to respond to the concerns of French speakers—were dismissed. According to Quebec's minister for cultural affairs

> The Quebec we build will be essentially French. The fact that the majority of its population is French will be clearly visible—at work, in communications and in the countryside. It will also be a country in which the traditional balance of power will be altered, especially in regard to the economy; the use of French will not merely be universalized to hide the predominance of *foreign* powers from the French-speaking population; this will accompany, symbolize and support a reconquest by the French-speaking majority in Quebec of that control over the economy which it ought to have. To sum up, the Quebec whose features are sketched in the Charter is a French-language society. (quoted in Williams 1984, 210; emphasis added)

The Charter of the French Language specified that French would be the only official language of the—previously bilingual—Province, though less than a decade earlier the Federal Official Languages Act had given French equal status with English in all Federal affairs (text in Bourhis 1984, 262–84). French would be the language of instruction in all schools in Quebec except for specifically permitted exceptions. The Charter restricted admission to English-language schools to children whose parents had themselves attended English-language elementary schools, while permitting those already enrolled and their siblings to complete their education in English (Council of Ministers of Education 1983, 134). Thus today, as children of immigrant parents enter the educational system, the French sector grows in relation to the English, and an extension program of francisation has been developed (Ministere de l'Education 1984).

At the same time, the development of French-language Protestant schools was promoted, so that new immigrants would not have the excuse of avoiding a French-language school because of its Catholic character. Jewish children had traditionally attended English Protestant schools, but now many attend French Protestant schools.

The effect of these measures was immediate. In 1976–77, only 17.8 percent of foreign students attended French-language schools, but the number increased to 40.4 percent by 1983–84 (*L'École québécoise* 1985, 22).

Over recent decades, a four-way public school system on the basis of language superimposed on the denominational distinctions has evolved in Quebec, with the Catholic and the Protestant systems each operating French-language and English-language schools. The earlier association of language and denomination continues, however: 92 percent of the students in Protestant schools are taught in English, and 94 percent of those in Catholic schools in French.

In 1983, 61 schools had separate French and English programs, but there were no truly bilingual schools in which some subjects were taught in each language to a mixed group of students (Council of Ministers of Education 1983, 137).

The preference for English among new immigrants to Canada has continued to cause deep concern among the Francophone majority in Quebec. The 1981 census found that in Quebec "there is no difference between the percentage for whom French is their mother tongue and the percentage who speak mostly French at home. On the other hand, of the 6.7 percent whose mother tongue is a language other than French or English, 4.8 percent speak their mother tongue at home and the rest English" (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 1987, 174).

With this background, it is not surprising that Quebec is less supportive than are most other Provinces of parent choice of instruction in native languages other than French or English. Of 55,000 students of foreign parentage in the Montreal area in 1983–84, only 2,600 were taking part in "heritage language" classes in their schools. On the other hand, the level of participation in publicly subsidized language programs operated by 62 community organizations outside of schools was impressive: 18,300 students, mostly at the elementary level, took part in programs in 39 languages (*L'École québecoise* 1985, 84).

A development in Quebec that has received international attention is the creation of an option, responding to the demands of middle-class English-speaking parents, for their children to be instructed in French by total or partial immersion (Lambert 1972; Swain and Barik 1978). In 1979–80, a half-dozen English-language school boards converted some 20 schools to the use of French as the language of instruction for at least some of their students. More than 10 percent of the students in English-language schools were taking part in such programs in 1981–82, and similar programs have been developed across Canada, though English-immersion programs for French-speaking students are not legally permitted in Quebec (table 7).

It should be noted that these were *not* integrated programs bringing together French-dominant and English-dominant students to learn together and from each other, as in the "two-way bilingual education" model promoted in Massachusetts, New York, and elsewhere in the United States.

Ontario

The right to confessional schooling in Ontario—then "Upper Canada"—was guaranteed by the British North America Act (or Constitution Act) of 1867. Previous legislation had placed Catholic separate schools on an equal basis with public schools, though providing financial support only through grade eight (the conclusion of a "common" education). Although this provision was eventually extended through grade 10, it left Catholic secondary education partially unassisted by the government, since in Ontario—as in the United States—no support was provided to private schools. The final years of a Catholic secondary education, following upon 10 years of government-supported Catholic "separate" education, were considered "private" and thus were unsubsidized by public funds.

In 1984, Premier of Ontario William Davis announced that his government would support inclusion of all Catholic secondary education in the provisions for government funding, effective September 1985.

> Since the beginning of our parliamentary democracy, freedom and, therefore, diversity and pluralism, have been fundamental values. . . . For some time, a third of the students in our dual elementary system have been enrolled in our Roman Catholic schools. And, through the administration of core curriculum and proper funding, our public elementary school system certainly has remained viable and, indeed, second to none. (Davis 1985, 74–75)

Davis sought to limit the implications of his recommendation of funding for Catholic secondary schools, suggesting that this should not be used as a precedent by other groups claiming public support for their schools, for whom there was no constitutional guarantee of religious schooling:

> I do not believe we could or should create a separate public system for a small segment of our community that wishes to isolate itself. However, we are addressing today the aspirations of a good third of our families who have demonstrated their competence and determination to provide contemporary education for their children. (Davis 1985, 75)

Perhaps to soften this rejection, Davis called for a comprehensive study of the role of independent schools in Ontario, and the commission chaired by Bernard Shapiro produced a major report the following year.

The commission found 535 private schools in Ontario representing a dozen religious affiliations and serving 87,000 students; 80

percent of the aggregate enrollment was in schools with a religious basis. In 1985, nearly 10,000 students attended schools with a Dutch Calvinist imprint, nearly 8,000 attended Jewish schools, and 5,000 attended Anglican schools. About 100 of the schools had a particular pedagogical orientation such as Montessori or Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner). The enrollment of private schools in Ontario had increased by 60 percent at the elementary and 90 percent at the secondary level between 1973 and 1983, while their share of total enrollment had grown from 2.3 percent to 4.7 percent.

In an essay on the history of private schools in Ontario, Robert Stamp refers to the period since 1960 as that of "schools of protest," organized by parents with fundamental objections to the public schooling available. "The lethargy, pessimism and apparent declining significance of private schooling in mid-20th century Ontario proved to be but a passing phase. The years following 1960 witnessed both a quantitative growth and an increasing diversity within the province's private school sector not seen since the early years of the 19th century" (Stamp 1985, 201).

Stamp notes the diverse motivations that led to the creation or expansion of private schools in Ontario:

> The Jewish move into the private sector was not a protest against the pedagogic quality of the public schools, but rather a move against the perceived submergence of Jewish identity into a process of homogenization that Ontario's post-war schools seemed to represent. The public school system offered few opportunities for transmitting a linguistic and cultural heritage so important to this minority. . . .
>
> While the Jewish population rejected the Christian hue of the public schools, and Catholics revolted against a perceived Protestant bias, more fundamentalist Christian groups charged that the public school system had become too secular. They wanted schooling for their children firmly grounded in evangelical and fundamentalist Christian values. Prominent among this segment of the population were the . . . Dutch Reformed immigrants who began arriving from the Netherlands in substantial numbers in the late 1940s and 1950s. (Stamp 1985, 201)

Although Stamp does not make the connection, this last group was already thoroughly familiar with confessional schooling and expected to exercise the same parental choice that they had enjoyed in the Netherlands. Their spokespersons were able to draw upon a heritage of neo-Calvinist thinking about social justice that demanded space within society for minorities to manage their own affairs. In particular, they insisted that the label "public" school should not be restricted to schools operated by government. In a 1970 publication subtitled "A case for public funds for ALL public schools," John Olthuis argued that

> The school system legally known as the public school system is not open to *all* members of the public. It is not open to those members of the public who wish to have their children educated in that system with its particular educational philosophy. . . . They have the *legal* right but not the *moral* freedom as they are conscious [sic] bound to educate their children in a system in harmony with the world and life principles they inculcate in their homes. (Olthuis 1970, 7)

The commission's report conceded, indeed, that "many such schools also contribute to the fulfillment of public purposes in ways substantial enough to make the label 'private' somewhat misleading" (Shapiro 1985, 43).

Some parents, like the Dutch post-war immigrants, came to Canada with a tradition of confessional schools. Changes taking place in public education had the effect of spurring others with no such tradition to look for alternatives. The Amish, for example, had been satisfied with the small rural public schools that they could directly influence; as school consolidation created larger, "mixed" schools, they became concerned about the increased exposure of their children to worldliness, and sometimes took over the now redundant local school buildings to operate their own private schools.

Religion was not the only basis for seeking such alternatives. Stamp notes that

> the private school sector in post-1960 Ontario also witnessed a rapid rise of schools founded for non-religious, purely educational or philosophical reasons. . . . Such schools began to proliferate in the mid-to-late-1960s, often as radical alternatives to the perceived inflexible, all-too-structured nature of the public school. In time the more radical or "free" schools moderated or died, and were replaced by more middle-of-the-road and eventually right-wing alternatives. Their growth challenged the public school sector to confront the concept of secular or philosophic pluralism in addition to religious and cultural pluralism. (Stamp 1985, 202)

Parents supported these very diverse private schools, according to the president of the Ontario Alliance of Alternative and Independent Schools, because of the parents' "belief that the public education system lacks some kind of fundamental moral content" (quoted by Stamp 1985, 204). Stamp concludes that

> Whatever the motives in their founding, whatever influences they had on public education, Ontario's private schools had assumed a significance in the early 1980s that could not have been predicted a generation earlier. Their religious diversity reflected the multicultural nature of the province; their philosophic diversity mirrored Ontario's secular pluralism. Proponents of public education had long hoped to accommodate such diversity within the state-supported school system. But an increasing minority of students and parents had chosen the private sector. (Stamp 1985, 205)

That these private schools did not receive public funding as did Catholic schools clearly raised questions of equity. The report of the commission that studied the problem will be discussed further in the conclusion of this chapter, since the report raises questions with significance far beyond Ontario.

The Catholic separate schools, like the nonsectarian common public schools, are administered by local school boards under supervision by the Ministry of Education, which has control over curriculum and teacher qualifications. There are thus both nonsectarian public school boards and Catholic public school boards in Ontario (as in Alberta and Saskatchewan).

Although Ontario had traditionally provided elementary education in French for children from French-speaking homes, this practice was banned for a time under the influence of the movement for forced assimilation of language minority groups, a movement which was powerful in Canada as well as in the United States before and after the First World War. A regulation adopted in 1912 mandated English as the language of instruction in all Ontario schools though French could be used on a transitional basis for the earliest grades.

The English requirement was gradually relaxed, and by 1950 a study found that French was in fact used as the language of instruction in many schools. In 1968, this situation was made legal, giving French speakers the right to French schools or to classes taught in French within English schools. A decade later, about 330 elementary and 25 secondary schools in the Province were using French as the primary language of instruction (Swain and Barik 1978, 5). The Provincial government provides supplemental grants to enable local school boards to provide French-language instruction in situations where the low number of students would not otherwise justify a school or program (Council of Ministers of Education 1985:102).

The Catholic flavoring of French-language public schools in Ontario traditionally made it possible for parents to choose Catholic schooling by choosing French-language schooling. Since the recent policy change permitting funding of the upper secondary grades of separate schools, this indirect approach to confessional schooling is no longer necessary.

Ontario requires that school boards provide instruction in French if a sufficient number of parents request it. Languages other than French and English may not be used as media of instruction in public schools, except on a transitional basis, but instruction in "heritage languages" may be provided for up to 2 hours a week outside of regular school hours. In 1981–82, nearly 82,000 students enrolled in such classes in more than 50 languages (table 8) (Cummins 1984, 88).

The Heritage Language Program provides almost full funding to school boards that implement supplemental classes in native languages at the request of community groups.

The Catholic "separate" school system of metropolitan Toronto has been active in offering such classes, with about 35,000 out of its total enrollment of 94,000 taking part.

Manitoba

The right of Catholic parents to publicly supported Catholic education for their children has long been controversial in Manitoba.

Between 1871 and 1890 Manitoba operated a denominational—Protestant (English) and Catholic (French)—system of education, as in Quebec, but in the latter year the legislature established a single, "non-sectarian" system and ended support for Catholic schools. Although the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that the rights of Catholics under the Constitution Act of 1867 were violated by this measure, Manitoba authorities were able to evade restoring the earlier parity. For nearly 80 years they provided no support at all to confessional schools, though Bergen suggests that the "substantial pioneer settlement areas of homogeneous francophone Catholic communities, in which the public schools in essence can be equated with the separate schools" of some other Provinces "had something of the same effect" (Bergen 1981a, 2).

Since around 1979, privately sponsored schools have received, under informal arrangements, some government funding via local public school boards on a per-pupil basis in exchange for a measure of government supervision. Some in-kind services (for example, home economics and industrial arts programs) are provided by local public schools to private schools.

While English was legally the language of instruction in all schools, there were by 1910, 126 schools using French, 61 using German, and a number of others using Polish, Ukrainian, and other languages for half of the instruction. In 1896, the use of other languages had been permitted for courses in religion and where students could be grouped together efficiently. The School Act of 1916—during the period of forced assimilation mentioned above—prohibited such bilingual schools. In 1967, however, the Provincial government allowed French to be used for up to half of the school day, and in 1970 it was approved as an official language of instruction for the entire program, if desired (Swain and Barik 1978, 27).

Local school boards must establish French-language classes where parents of at least 23 elementary or 23 secondary students can be assembled. The Manitoba minister of education stressed, in 1977, that parents had the responsibility to choose the language of instruction for their children, though local school boards could decide, for the sake of efficiency, in which schools each language would be offered (Council of Ministers of Education 1983, 73–76).

The French-speaking minority—about 6 percent of the total population—thus has had a choice, in recent years, of schools in which French is the primary language of instruction.

> The change which made possible the creation of such schools was the creation by the federal government of official minorities, French and English, on a national basis, and the recognition by the Manitoba government, after a century of struggle by their French-speaking minority for language rights in matters of education. Not all members of the French-speaking minority, however, reacted in the same way to these changes in the political environment. Although many were willing to adopt an educational formula that would give the optimal guarantees for the survival of the language, some were unwilling to compromise the future of their children in an English-speaking world, and still others were willing to split the risks. (Mackey 1984, 170)

As a result of this ambivalence on the part of parents, "four types of schools had to be recognized to permit a range [of choice] from almost unilingual irredentism [in French] to unilingual assimilation [in English]" (Mackey 1984, 170).

Other language groups were accommodated by a 1979 statute that permits native languages other than French or English to be used for half of the school day, and by two years later, 320 students were enrolled in English-Ukrainian programs (Cummins 1984, 66).

There has been an especially strong development of supplemental programs in German and in Ukrainian to serve the children and grandchildren of the refugees from Eastern Europe who settled in the farming areas of Manitoba after World War II, as well as the descendants of Mennonites who were recruited for their farming skills a century ago (table 8).

Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Act of 1905, by which the Province joined the Confederation, guaranteed that there would be no discrimination in government funding for "separate" schools. Within 2 years, however, the legislature decided that support would not be provided to denominational high schools in areas already served by a public high school; this policy was not reversed until 1964. Since then separate Catholic school systems receive equal public support through grade 12 (Bergen 1988).

In a 1965 ruling, a court found that a member of a religious minority that had established its own separate school district (that is, with government funding) had no right to attend the common public school instead.

> Under the laws of this Province, a minority group within a public school district has a right to establish a separate school. That group may be "Protestant" or "Roman Catholic". In the Regina public school district the minority which established the separate school district was, and is Roman Catholic. It thus follows that the Public School Board in limiting its obligations to educating children of the faith of the public school community do, in fact, refuse to enroll children of the Roman Catholic faith. Such, however, is the inevitable result of the policy but not the purpose thereof. (Finkelstein 1985, 106)

This unusual ruling ("children of the faith of the public school community") illustrates the fact that the rights of religious or ethnic communities to provide education can be quite distinct from the right of individual parents to choose a school.

As in Ontario, the separate (denominational) schools are under the administration of local school boards and the supervision of Provincial education authorities.

In addition to public funding for denominational school districts, provision is made for approved private schools to receive grants for high school students. Such schools must meet various requirements as to courses of study, teacher qualifications, and supervision by the

Ministry of Education. The grants, in 1985, amounted to about 59 percent of the provincial per-pupil grant to public schools. Nine of the 10 private schools in the province received such funding. No public funding is provided for private elementary schools.

Thirty-three schools in another category of "alternative" schools do not satisfy the requirements for provincial funding.

The School Act of 1931 stipulated that "English shall be the sole language of instruction in all the schools, and no language of instruction other than English shall be taught during school hours." French could be taught as a subject for no more than one hour a day. This was amended in 1967 to allow the use of French or another language as the medium *for instruction* one hour a day, and more recently "designated schools" were allowed to use French as the primary medium of instruction.

The system currently offers two types of schools in which French is the primary language of instruction: those for students from French-speaking families and those that provide a French immersion program of between 50 and 80 percent of the instruction for students from English-speaking families.

Some 2,900 students take part in in-school programs in their heritage languages (as contrasted with the two official languages of Canada), in Cree, German and Ukrainian, while another 2,100 take part in supplemental programs in 21 languages sponsored by various organizations and funded by the Provincial and Federal governments and, in some cases, by the countries of origin.

Alberta

The right to Catholic or Protestant schools, and to funding for all 12 grades equal to that provided to public schools, was guaranteed by the Alberta Act of 1905 by which the Province joined the Confederation. As a result—unlike in Manitoba where a similar commitment was not honored, or in British Columbia where it never existed—there has been little reason to create private Catholic schools in Alberta.

In a 1976 case somewhat parallel to the Saskatchewan case described above, the court held that it was legal to charge tuition to a child enrolled in a school other than that established for his denomination. The basis of this ruling was the fact that school taxes are paid on a denominational basis so that, for example, Catholic taxpayers support only the Catholic separate school system (Finkelstein 1985, 107). Once a Catholic separate school district has been established, all Catholic residents of the area are taxed for the support of that district and all non-Catholics for the public schools.

As in Ontario and Saskatchewan, the separate Protestant and Catholic schools are under the administration of local school boards, and the supervision of provincial education authorities on the same basis as nonsectarian public schools.

The increasing secularization of the Protestant public or separate schools has led, in recent years, to creation of a certain number of private schools. Government funding for these schools began in 1968, after a campaign led by a group of private schools and strongly opposed by the Alberta Teachers' Association. In 1975, the law was amended to allow local school boards to make agreements with private schools. "The school board may provide educational services for the benefit of students enrolled in a private school, or it may accept educational services from a private school for students enrolled in schools under its control, or, indeed, a board may make arrangements to have children resident within its district enroll in a private school for instruction" (Bergen 1982a, 320).

At present, private schools receive provincial government grants equivalent to 75 percent of those provided to public and separate schools; these grants amount to about one-third of the per-pupil revenue for public schools. More than 12,000 students were enrolled in 190 private schools in 1985.

In a study conducted in 1981–82, Bergen identified 100 private schools in Alberta (he found 134 in 1985–6), in four categories. The first category consisted of 46 schools essentially equivalent to local public schools and approved for government funding, the second of 12 schools for the handicapped, the third of 8 supplemental language schools (4 German, 2 Ukrainian, 1 Italian and 1 Lithuanian), and the fourth of 16 schools similar to those in the first category but not approved for government grants. Another 18 schools (an estimate) operate without government authorization.

Of the schools in the first category, 7 were secular (including one "elite" independent school) and 39 "non-secular"; this last group had been growing rapidly, with 10 more schools and a 38 percent enrollment increase in 5 years. The non-secular schools approved for funding received between a third and a half of their operating costs from government grants. The fourth category schools and the unauthorized schools—generally Protestant—had sprung up recently. Alberta was clearly experiencing a dramatic growth in demand for private religious schooling and of willingness to make sacrifices to obtain it, even outside the government-subsidized sector.

Schools reported to Bergen that they were seeking "to provide an instructional setting in which the cooperation of home, church and school can be obtained," and most parents responding did not think that a neutral public school could possibly meet their needs (Bergen 1982a, 327–29). There are indications, however, that more flexibility by public school authorities might have made it unnecessary for parents to create their own alternatives. The concerns of Jewish parents and of Hutterite parents have been accommodated within the public system. In Edmonton, the Talmud Torah School became an alternative school under the Public School Board in 1975, "open only to those students who are committed to the entire school program, including the Hebrew language and Jewish religious studies" (quoted in Bergen 1982a, 330). This flexibility reflects a sensitivity to parent concerns and to minority religious groups which is not always present, however.

> Though some groups in Alberta have been able to conduct alternative schools under the general direction of public school boards, such as the Hebrew School in Edmonton, any such provisions are subject to the whims of the particular boards. For example, though Hebrew and other religious oriented schools had been established as alternate schools under the Calgary public school board, a subsequently elected slate of school trustees terminated all such arrangements. This in turn caused many of the parents to turn to private schools to meet their wishes. (Bergen 1987b, 295)

This was in fact the leading issue in the local elections in Calgary in 1983.

> Calgary had, in its public system, a native [Indian] school, a Hebrew school, and two highly popular "Logos" (evangelical) Christian schools. As a result of the election the Hebrew and Logos schools were promptly ejected but the native school was allowed to remain. This was especially incongruous as the native school explicitly defined itself as "religious" while the Hebrew school defined itself as "secular." . . . When the Calgary public school board carried out its excommunication the separate school board, in an act of genuine toleration, took in . . . the Hebrew school. So we have a self-proclaimed "secular" Hebrew school forced to operate under the auspices of the publicly funded Catholic school board. (Marshall 1985, 14)

The Mennonites, among others, have been concerned to educate their children in their own schools. The first Mennonite settlers, German speakers from Russia, were recruited to the Canadian plains of Manitoba a century ago by promises of land and of religious freedom, including that of educating their own children. Subsequent efforts to force assimilation of immigrants led to the banning of instruction in German and the requirement that all children attend public or approved private schools. As noted above, these language restrictions have been removed, but Mennonites and other Protestants do not enjoy the guarantee of denominational public schooling that were written into the Constitution Act of 1867 for Catholics.

Because of their residential proximity, the Mennonites (like the Hutterites) found the local rural public schools generally acceptable until, in recent decades, the consolidation of smaller schools and the increased secularization of the curriculum led to an increasing alienation (Bergen 1978d). In 1977, members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, known as the Holdemans, took their children out of local public schools and placed them in a school they had built and staffed themselves. Since this alternative had not been approved by Provincial authorities, they were prosecuted. The judge hearing the case found, in a 1978 ruling (*Regina vs Wiebe*), that the guarantees of freedom of religion under the Alberta Bill of Rights "rendered inoperative" the attendance requirements of the school legislation. He concluded that the instruction in public schools was incompatible with the religious faith and practices of the Holdeman Mennonites (Bergen 1978b, 8; Bergen 1978a; Thiessen 1986).

A poll conducted in Alberta in 1984 found that 93 percent of respondents believed that parents should have the right to choose their children's school, and 77 percent believed that such choices should be backed by tax dollars. Another study found that 79 percent of school superintendents and 86 percent of school board chairpersons supported the freedom to choose private schools; the overwhelming majority of both groups believed that public educators needed to understand better why some parents were choosing private schools, and to make appropriate accommodations in an effort to prevent the establishment of more of them (Bergen 1987a).

Alberta's (usual) liberality with respect to confessional schooling is paralleled by its policies about the language of instruction. The first schools in the area were operated by the churches, and the public educational system set up under the North West Act of 1875 included Protestant and Catholic sections and allowed schools to determine their program and language of instruction. From 1892 on, the basic instruction in public schools was given in English but supplemented by instruction in French where required by the student population; private schools were free to teach entirely in French.

In 1950, schools were permitted to use French in the early grades, and this policy was extended throughout the grades in 1968 and 1970. Parents who could not obtain instruction in French in their local district (because of the small numbers of students wishing it)

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could enroll in another district for that purpose. In 1981, French programs were provided in 31 of 130 school jurisdictions, enrolling 12,800 students in 77 of 1,500 public and "separate" schools.

In 1985 a court ruled, on the basis of Canada's new *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, that parents in the Edmonton area had a right to publicly funded schools in which all instruction would be in French (Bergen 1986).

Alberta was also the first Province (in 1971) to authorize the use of languages other than English and French in public schools, originally in response to the demands of the Ukrainian community. A total of 1,271 students were enrolled, in 1979–80, in programs in which their "heritage language"—including Hebrew, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and others—was used half of the day (Cummins 1984, 88; Bergen 1988).

British Columbia

Alone among the Canadian Provinces, British Columbia followed the American pattern of supporting only nonsectarian common schools and prohibiting the teaching of religion in those schools. On the other hand—another similarity with practice in the United States prior to the court rulings of recent decades—reading from the Bible and reciting the Lord's Prayer were mandatory (Bergen 1986b).

This situation changed with enactment of the Independent Schools Support Act in 1977. Public funding is now provided to a recognized private school, subject to government inspection to ensure that it has "no existing or proposed programmes of a nature that would promote or foster doctrines of (i) racial or ethnic superiority, or (ii) religious intolerance or persecution, or (iii) social change through violent action" (section 5).

Independent schools in existence for at least 3 years and with adequate facilities may receive a provincial grant of 9 percent of the per-pupil operating cost of the local public school district, while a 30 percent grant is provided to independent schools that meet a variety of requirements set by the Ministry of Education that make them essentially equivalent to public schools.

As of July 1984, 11 independent schools were included in the first category and 141 in the second, while others were as yet receiving no public funding.

The most rapid growth in this Province has been that of evangelical Protestant schools, 65 of which were founded between 1977 and 1980 alone. The number of private schools in the Province has grown from 70 in 1959–60 to 234 in 1985–6; much of this growth took place before and was a cause rather than an effect of the provision of public funding.

Language of instruction was not regulated by law in British Columbia until 1978, when policies were adopted to promote French programs for the French-speaking population. School boards were required to provide French-language core curriculum (*Programme-cadre de français*), with all instruction in French except for a period of English as a second language each day, when the parents of 10 French-speaking children requested it. English-dominant students who had been enrolled in a French immersion program and transferred to a school without one could be admitted to a *Programme-cadre de français*, if available, but otherwise no provision has been made for integrated bilingual education in British Columbia.

Yukon and Northwest Territories

The Yukon and Northwest Territories provide "separate" (denominational) schools where requested as part of the territorial system in these vast but thinly-populated areas; there is one private school in Whitehorse, YT, and one in Yellowknife, NT (Bergen 1988), but no provision is made for public funding of private schools.

Conclusions: The Ongoing Debate

The debate in Ontario over the possible extension of public funding to confessional and other independent schools on the same basis as it is already provided to Catholic schools provides a convenient summary of the arguments for and against expanded parent choice in the Canadian context.

As the Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario pointed out, "In Ontario and in Canada, both characterized by a heterogeneous population and an official ideology that is multi-ethnic in nature, no arrangement is likely to be a permanent one. Such a society will possess—to some extent—pluralistic social structures with differentiated institutions, and the degree to which different groups will interact in common settings will vary over time. (Shapiro 1985, 1)

Surveys conducted in the early 1980s found Ontarians divided on the subject of public funding for private schools, as did the participants in public hearings sponsored by the Commission. Predictably, representatives of public school boards and organizations were almost unanimous in their opposition, though some acknowledged that there should be more diversity and choice among public schools and suggested that some private schools could be brought under the auspices of public authorities. Even representatives of Protestant private schools were divided between those who advanced the claim to equitable treatment on the same basis as Catholic separate schools and those who feared that the consequent government involvement would create more problems than the funding would solve.

Those opposed to further funding for private and confessional education relied essentially on two lines of argument.

The Common School

The first line of argument, going back a hundred years and more, describes the public school as the "common school" of the nation, the crucible of national identity. Already in 1972, the Commission on Educational Planning for Alberta warned that the increasing number of private schools "might lead to an unsustainable degree of educational and social fragmentation." Similarly, the Ontario Commission on Private Schools asserted that "the values reflected by the boards of education are seen as the shared values of almost all Canadians, irrespective of their religious background. That is, the relatively secular, humanistic nature of the public schools is seen by some to truly reflect the current societal conditions in Ontario and Canada" (Shapiro 1985, 25).

This argument was countered by representatives of various forms of confessional schooling. Jewish organizations

> pointed out that for religious Jewish parents, educating their children at "Jewish schools" both at the elementary and high school level is a fundamental aspect of their religion. . . . The public sector is unable to provide Jewish children with either this necessary religious education or an understanding of their own cultural tradition as part of the pluralistic society on which Canada is founded. Therefore, the Jewish schools ought to be viewed as a legitimate and positive factor in the Canadian mosaic and, therefore, worthy of public support. (Shapiro 1985, 28)

This difference is not readily resolvable. After all, as the Commission noted, "a commitment to common schools and/or private schools starts with values that are not themselves subject to empirical demonstration" (Shapiro 1985, 38).

In answer to arguments that public schools, by seeking neutrality, are based on values that are acceptable to the majority of Ontario residents, Olthuis—writing from a Calvinist perspective and the Dutch tradition of educational pluralism—pointed out that

> the number of persons embracing the educational philosophy of a particular educational system does not determine

> the public or private status of that system. Surely in a free society the majority would not wish to foist its value judgments on minorities under the guise that minority beliefs are private and majority beliefs are public. . . . However desirable some may consider the existence of a public educational philosophy, and however vigorously they may contend that secular humanism or non-sectarianism is such a public value, the truth is that all educational philosophies are as private or as public as one another. . . . Attempts to erase fundamental differences in the name of a superficial uniformity are not conducive for true unity.
>
> The claim that the differences between Roman Catholics, Jews, Protestants and Secularists do not affect education, results from failure to take these various faiths seriously. . . . The recognition of fundamental differences is a mark of true tolerance and not a sign of bigotry. One of the characteristics of genuine freedom is that people of different beliefs can live together peacefully in a nation and enjoy equal rights and privileges. The freedom to differ and the right to act accordingly constitutes the basic difference between a free and a totalitarian society. (Olthuis 1970, 7–8)

The Ontario commission itself came down, in its report, on the side of those who believe that it is important for Canadian society that the public schools "seek a common unifying core." "Schools are better able to teach common understanding and shared values if they are less homogeneous and can, at least potentially, bring children of different backgrounds together" (Shapiro 1985, 39).

It is easy to imagine the supporters of Jewish or Catholic or Calvinist schools countering that "schools are better able to teach common understanding and shared values" if they themselves reflect such a common understanding and shared values, and such agreement is more likely in a school chosen by teachers and parents on the basis of their convictions about education and character. As the Commission conceded, "public schools too often easily assumed that the mere physical presence of various groups within their student bodies somehow, of its own accord, bred tolerance and understanding. . . . It must be admitted that no one knows just which schooling experiences are most likely to produce understanding and tolerant adult citizens and, from the point of view of minority groups, large-scale common settings are often repressive settings" (Shapiro 1985, 50).

The argument is made that government has a right to educate its citizens on the basis of values it believes will serve the common good;

Mark Holmes pointed out in a paper included in the Commission's report that

> those who believe in the state's right to impose an education on every child are not normally willing to embrace any education that any state may actually choose to promulgate. Liberal rationalists objected to the Catholic hegemony of French education in the Province of Quebec. They, in turn, now that education in that province has been largely secularized de facto (but not yet de jure) are loth to consider the objections of those who, in turn, reject secular humanism. (Shapiro 1985, 124)

Educational Equity

The line of argument for a public school monopoly in order to shape students on the basis of common values has lost much of its force as society—in Canada as in the United States—has lost confidence that there are indeed such shared values. In place of that argument public school advocates now more commonly stress the need to ensure educational equity and fair chances in life through diminishing the effect of elite private education.

The Commission was told that "support for private schools will erode the financial and ideological support for public schooling which in turn will deny equality of educational opportunity . . . by fostering a two-tier system of schooling inimical to the democratic traditions that public schools are intended to serve" (Shapiro 1985, 47). After all, "if such funding should result in any large transfer of either the higher achieving or the more affluent students from the public to the independent schools, the ability of the public schools (as the schools of 'second choice') to offer equal educational opportunity will have been destroyed" (51).

On the other hand, public schools do not necessarily promote equal opportunity through bringing together heterogeneous groups of students. In Canada, as in the United States, students from affluent families, from poor families, and from those in between tend to attend schools—whether public or private—with students of similar social class (Glenn 1987). As Holmes notes, in the Canadian context, "It appears inconsistent to endorse education as a public good, but then demand that a certain class of citizens (those with money) be excluded from involvement in the public operation" (Holmes 1985, 127).

The logic of the equal opportunity argument—if applied consistently—would require banning private schools altogether, as well as mandating school assignments on a metropolitan basis, designed for social class as well as racial integration. In fact, only totalitarian regimes ban private education, and even in such cases the political elite is able to obtain especially favorable opportunities for its children. Such policies do not commend themselves in a democratic system.

The association of school boards in Alberta in 1981 urged the provincial government "to delay any further increase in funding . . . to private schools until a thorough study has been undertaken to assess the nature and extent of the impact of such funding on the operation of public schools." Bergen notes that this group had never protested against private schools for the handicapped, and suggests that they objected only when losing the students who are most talented and motivated.

Canada has some elite private schools, but many other private schools are anything but elite and indeed less so than public schools in affluent communities. A policy seeking equal opportunity must logically concern itself with how children whose parents (for whatever reason) do not wish to enroll them in the available public schools can be ensured an adequate education.

Accommodating Choice

The Ontario commission concluded its review of these issues by making 61 recommendations, of which several have more than local significance: Public school systems should create more diversity in their educational offerings, and actively promote parent choice; the Provincial Ministry of Education, in turn, should consider how it could provide more local autonomy to make such diversity possible. Private schools should be encouraged to negotiate agreements with public school boards to enter into an association that would provide, on the one hand, public funding for the operation of the associated school and, on the other, assurances of nondiscrimination and appropriate educational standards.

The extreme variety of forms of government support for parent choice of education—both on confessional and on language grounds—among the Canadian Provinces contrasts to a striking extent with the substantial uniformity in this respect among American States. Canadian policymakers have had substantial freedom to develop policies that seemed to fit their local circumstances. While some of these policies may have been unjust or unwise, they have come to respond more and more to parent wishes, even when those parents belong to minorities of little political influence.

The greater uniformity of American State policies in this respect are usually attributed to the effect of Supreme Court rulings in *Everson vs. Board of Education* (1947) and subsequent cases. While the impact of the "strict separation" interpretation of the First Amendment can scarcely be overstated, most of the States had already erected "walls of separation" against public funding of private schools, largely in a reaction against the perceived threat of Catholic education to the "Americanization" of immigrants. The ideology of the common school, neutral among the religious confessions but itself strongly marked in values and world view, was already strongly established in the United States before the postwar Supreme Court rulings (Glenn 1988).

In this historical context, the rulings may have headed off a development in American education parallel to that which occurred in Canada, Australia, and France in the same period, toward a greater willingness to support confessional schooling from public funds. The period after World War II saw an ebbing of the old hostilities between the militant secularizers and the Church Militant in nation after nation and a new willingness on the part of governments to accommodate the desire of some parents to obtain an education shaped by religion for their children. The possibility of such a development was cut off in the United States by the removal of the issue from the political arena to that of constitutional interpretation (Sorauf 1976). As the issue emerges again into American political debate, the Canadian experience with accommodating religious diversity could prove particularly valuable.

Canada may also have something to teach us about how to deal with linguistic pluralism, though here the Canadian experience—like that of Belgium—may be a warning as well as an encouragement. The Canadian accommodation of language differences has two very distinct faces.

The uneasy relationship of French and English in Canada (like Dutch and French in Belgium) has had the effect of limiting the opportunity for parents in Quebec to make significant decisions about the language and the cultural context within which their children will be educated, while expanding that opportunity elsewhere in Canada.

While the greatest gains have been for French-speaking parents outside Quebec and for English-speaking parents who wish their children to learn French, the desire of many parents to maintain the languages of their ethnic heritage has also been accommodated. To what extent a supplemental program in—say—Ukrainian will prevent an intergenerational language shift to English or to French, or whether it should even attempt to do so, is unclear. Nevertheless, the availability of such opportunities represents an admirable commitment to the diversity of Canadian society.

Canadian efforts to respect the desire of certain members of language minority groups to maintain something of their heritage have increased the richness and flavor of education. If language pluralism can function as a dimension along which individual choice is exercised rather than as a pretext for building and maintaining power blocks, Canada's diversity will be largely benign in its social effects.

West Germany

arental Choice in erman Education

The Enlightenment-inspired rulers of Germany and Austria during the late 18th century asserted—for the first time—the authority of the State in education over against that of the hurch and of individual families. These rulers thus began a tradi- on that has marked German education for the past 200 years. ecause they organized education in alliance with the churches, owever, placing elementary schools under the supervision of local astors and stressing religious instruction, the development of pri- te schooling in Germany has been modest.

German education has nevertheless always been marked by diver- ty. At the elementary level most public schools have until recently een "confessional," either Protestant or Catholic, reflecting the ligious makeup of the local community.

Secondary education continues to be divided between three types schools of varying academic difficulty, the Hauptschule, Real- chule, and Gymnasium, despite sporadic efforts to convert the ystem to a comprehensive model (the Gesamtschule). The issues ised by this system of tracking will not concern us in this paper.

Although German education includes a certain amount of diver- ity, this has not been based upon a fully articulated commitment to arent choice as in recent years in the Netherlands. Diversity in ermany has been based more upon the rights of groups—the atholic and Protestant churches and populations—than upon those f individuals. While the scope of confessional schooling has declined harply in recent decades as a result of growing secularization, it emains a real alternative for many parents.

Apart from taking advantage of these vestiges of an earlier system esigned to accommodate the primary religious groups, German arents have not been able to exercise much influence over the ducation of their children. The choice of a publicly supported tholic school, for example, may not offer real pedagogical differences, given substantial government regulation and pressure for uniformity.

The present situation in which parent choice, though extensive, is of limited real significance may change as the result of an April 1987 decision by the Federal Constitutional Court, described below. As in other liberal democracies, German education is increasingly expected to serve the diverse agendas of individuals rather than to serve primarily as an instrument of State or of Church. The experience of Nazi efforts to impose a single model of schooling in order to eliminate competing opinions and independent thinking has served as a warning, to Germans, against the heavy hand even of a democratically elected government.

The Background of German Education

Federalism

As in the United States and Canada (and in contrast with France or the Netherlands), German education is the responsibility of the States; the Federal role is limited. This decentralization, and the role of confessional schooling, require some historical explanation.

The Germany that emerged from the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) consisted of more than 1,800 sovereign political entities, including 77 major principalities and 51 independent cities, loosely associated in the Holy Roman Empire. Between 1800 and 1815, the Empire was abolished and its components consolidated into 39 States as a result of the victories and then the defeat of Napoleon. During the course of the 19th century further consolidation and territorial aggression occurred, with Prussia taking the leading role, culminating in the proclamation of the German Empire in 1870.

These political (and military) developments were paralleled by immense enthusiasm for the process of "nation-building," particularly among liberal intellectuals. This nationalistic emphasis led, in turn, to concern for popular education as a means of creating national self-awareness and loyalty, a program laid out with great resonance by the philosopher J. G. Fichte in his *Addresses to the German Nation* of 1807–1808. Although the "German nation" was then a program rather than a reality, Fichte called for a "national education" to "mould the Germans into a corporate body, which shall be stimulated and animated in all its individual members by the same interest." (Fichte 1922, 13, 15)

After World War I, Germany lost substantial territories, while during World War II, the Allies discussed dividing their too-powerful enemy up so that it could not again threaten its neighbors (Mann 1967, 975). The development of the Cold War led to the present division into the Federal Republic of (West) Germany and the (East) German Democratic Republic. The former is made up of the former French, British, and American Occupation Zones (1945–1949).

The 11 States (Laender) of West Germany were created by the occupying powers after the war as a basis for beginning to restore the structure of government. Apart from Bavaria and the city-states of Hamburg and Bremen, these States were all artificial creations, patching together disparate territories (Mann 1967, 982). With the restoration of civilian rule in 1949 the Laender were given substantial autonomy, in part as a safeguard against the re-emergence of a strong central authority.

With respect to education, the governments of the Laender "are constitutionally vested with strong responsibilities . . . leaving open to the local governments and the individual schools only quite limited possibilities of participation in decision-making" (Max Planck Institute 1983, 67).

Religious Diversity

The pre-Napoleonic principalities of Germany were marked by religious uniformity based on the choice of the ruler (cuius regio, eius religio); that principle had been the basis for peace in 1555 after the first phase of warfare associated with the Protestant Reformation. There were Lutheran States and Calvinist States and Roman Catholic States, many of the latter ruled by their prince-bishops. As Prussia expanded its dominions, its Calvinist ruling family came to govern a predominantly Lutheran population, and when the consolidations effected by Napoleon merged other Calvinist and Lutheran areas, pressure developed to create State churches unifying the two major Protestant denominations. The Church of the Prussian Union was established in 1817, followed by several others in smaller States (Spotts 1973, 6). These mergers were based on administrative convenience rather than theological conviction, and have not prevented continuing theological disagreements.

The confessional character of German schooling has, as a result of this doctrinal emphasis, always had a rather formal character. A Protestant school is a school expressing, in its catechism classes, this officially sanctioned nondenominational Protestantism, not the strong convictions of a particular group of parents.

Although the old principalities disappeared in the consolidation into larger administrative units over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, their distinctiveness perpetuated itself in the religious distribution of the German population. In 1939 60 percent of rural counties within the present borders of East and West Germany had a population more than 90 percent either Protestant or Catholic. Of 11,879 boroughs in the former Prussian areas of West Germany before the war, 2,163 had not a single Catholic, and 2,583 others had less than 5, while 1,098 were without a single Protestant and 1,153 others had less than 5. Of 7,266 boroughs in Bavaria, 1,424 had only Catholics and 140 only Protestants (Spotts 1973, 48).

With this demographic pattern, organizing schools on a confessional basis was simple. The fundamental law governing Prussian schools, the *Algemeines Landrecht* of 1794, required attendance (from the age of 5 until the essentials had been mastered) in publicly funded schools responsible to the State but under supervision of the local clergy. Children who were in the religious minority in a particular school were to be provided with alternative religious instruction (Helmreich 1959, 34–35). This government intervention in elementary education was imitated in other German States, and was admired as a model in France and the United States in the 1830s and subsequently (Glenn 1988, 108).

Attempts during the 19th century in Baden and Hesse to create common schools (Simultanenschule) in which Catholic and Protestant students would be taught together except for their religious instruction were of limited success. While the princes of Nassau believed that these interdenominational schools would "unite the people and educate them to tolerance and the unified support of the state," critics countered that

> Teachers would have to curb their free expression in teaching certain worldly subjects, notably history. . . . Instead of diminishing denominational differences Simultanschulen would increase them, notably through separating pupils into special religion classes. . . . The Simultanschulen above all disrupted the common spirit which ought to pervade all instruction. Religion was not something to be separated out, but was an integral part of a whole school. Without unified Catholic or Protestant instruction the complete education of a child would suffer. (Helmreich 1959, 39–40).

In the political reaction after the Europe-wide revolutions of 1848, Prussian authorities imposed strict government supervision of schooling at all levels. Teachers were blamed for the "irreligious pseudoeducation of the masses," and the new Constitution of 1850 required that "In the organization of public elementary schools all possible consideration is to be accorded to the confessional situation."

Although German elementary schools were primarily confessional, this status did not make them any less subject to government direction. There was little likelihood, during the 19th century, of the Protestant churches—committed to an alliance of Throne and Altar—taking an independent line in education. Catholic leaders were more inclined to independence, in the tradition of the prince-bishops of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Center Party was organized in 1870 to protect the interests of the Church, not least in relation to confessional schooling. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck moved to bring Catholics to heel soon after proclamation of the new Empire. A Prussian law adopted in 1872, for example, put all schools directly under the supervision of the government, and soon thereafter, members of religious teaching orders were barred from schools.

This struggle (the Kulturkampf) ended in a draw between the government and the Church: the mobilization of Catholics in response to moves against confessional schooling made them a political force to be reckoned with, but at the same time it was clear that all schools would be expected to serve the ends of the State and meet its requirements, whatever the schools' confessional character.

It was, indeed, precisely the schools' confessional character that made them seem, to the government, such an important means of ensuring social order through moral instruction. Even where interdenominational common schools had taken root, many of them were placed on a confessional basis to ensure the effectiveness of their religious instruction. The overwhelming majority of elementary schools in the German Empire were either Protestant or Catholic. In Prussia in 1906 of more than 6 million elementary students only 370,000 attended nonconfessional schools, often as a matter of necessity in religiously mixed areas (Helmreich 1959, 61).

Weimar and Third Reich

These arrangements were called strongly into question after the German defeat and the fall of the Empire in 1918. Conflicts over the confessional character of elementary schools "exceeded in intensity and scope all other conflicts over school policy" (Hamann 1986, 169).

A political struggle developed during the writing of a Constitution for the Weimar Republic between those supporting confessional schools and those who wanted to use education as a means of developing common loyalties to the new political system, a "school of national unity."

Prussian Minister of Culture Carl Heinrich Becker stated in 1919 that Germany needed a cultural policy consisting of "the conscious employment of spiritual values in the service of the people and of the state to achieve internal consolidation and strength for external competition and struggle with other peoples" (Max Planck Institute 1983, 55). Thus, the idea of education to foster national policy survived in the agenda of the post-war liberal democracy.

Although the Social Democrats—opponents of confessional schooling—were the largest party in the National Assembly elected in 1919, they were forced into compromise with the Catholic Center Party and Protestant conservatives. The decision about whether schools would be organized on a confessional basis was left up to "those entitled to determine the education of the children," though with a provision that "Christian interdenominational schools" would be the norm unless parents requested otherwise. Article 120 of the Weimar Constitution provided that "The education of their children for physical, intellectual and social efficiency is the highest duty and natural right of parents, whose activities shall be supervised by the political community."

As Helmreich observes, this clause "was directed against the extreme Socialist demand for "community upbringing" (Gemeinschaftserziehung), but it was also aimed at the Catholic theory that parents' rights over their children's education were outside the sphere of the state" (Helmreich 1959, 113; Lundgreen 1981, 15–17).

Article 146 provided that

> for the admission of a child to a particular school, his gifts and interests, not the economic and social position or the religious confession of his parents, are decisive. In each community, therefore, elementary schools will be established based upon the confessional or world view demand of those responsible for education [that is, parents or guardians], provided that a well-organized school system is not affected thereby. The desires of those responsible for education are to be respected so far as possible. (Herrlitz, Hopf, and Titze 1986, 114)

This compromise left room for each group to press for its preferred type of school at the local level. Socialists could seek "secular" schools, Liberals could insist that interconfessional schools were the norm unless parents asked for an alternative, and Catholics and Protestants could count on most parents to request continuation of the existing arrangements. In one significant change, clergy supervision of schools—more a burden than a source of real authority for pastors—was abolished.

Private elementary schools could be established only if "there is in the municipality no public elementary school of their religious type or of their world view, or if the [public] educational administration recognizes a special pedagogical interest." Schools based on a world-view were those whose distinctiveness was not religious but based on some form of humanistic pedagogy.

Public elementary schools continued to be either Protestant or Catholic in Prussia and Bavaria until the 1930s. Even the nominally interdenominational schools found in some areas were often de facto confessional.

> Thus, while the schools of the Hanseatic cities were technically nondenominational, the population was so overwhelmingly Protestant that provision was made only for Protestant religious instruction. Catholic children as a rule attended private Catholic schools, which, however, received a subsidy from public funds. Likewise in Baden, the classic Simultan school territory, many regions were so predominantly Catholic or Protestant that schools were often attended and staffed by members of only one confession. (Helmreich 1959, 134)

In 1932, just before the takeover by the National Socialists, there were roughly 4,560,000 Protestant elementary schoolchildren in Germany, of whom 3,365,000 attended Protestant public schools, 1,142,000 attended interdenominational public schools, 24,000 attended Catholic public schools, and 29,000 attended secular public schools, while 17,000 attended private schools.

Catholic students were even more concentrated in confessional schools, with 2,295,000 of 2,702,000 attending Catholic public schools, 64,000 attending Protestant public schools, 337,000 attending interdenominational public schools, 6,000 attending secular public schools, and 17,000 attending private schools.

There were in that year altogether 52,959 publicly supported elementary schools in Germany, of which 29,020 were Protestant, 15,256 Catholic, 97 Jewish, 8,291 interdenominational, and 295 secular (Helmreich 1959, 137).

Although Hitler's initial statement of his government's policy, in 1933, promised that "the national Government will allow and confirm to the Christian denominations the enjoyment of their due influence in schools and education," the National Socialists moved to eliminate this source of alternative loyalty as soon as they were securely in power. This extension of direct State control in education was an important element of the Nazi program of radical centralization and imposed uniformity, in which everything possible was done to eliminate competing sources of opinion and independent thinking.

"The influence of uncontrollable or, from a National Socialist perspective, opposed educational forces (such as Family, Church, private schools, residential homes, and alternative pedagogies) was eliminated to the greatest extent possible. In this connection the closing of almost all experimental and private schools was considered a decisive measure of educational policy" (Hamann 1986, 179).

A primary instrument of the Nazi program was the "German Community School" (Deutsche Gemeinschaftsschule; the phrase echoes the earlier Socialist demand for Gemeinschaftserziehung). In 1937 Hitler insisted that "this Reich will hand over its youth to no one, but will take its education and its formation upon itself" (Conway 1968, 20, 178; Helmreich 1959, 173). By 1939 Nazi leader Martin Bormann issued a directive that

> The creation of an ideologically objective school system is one of the most important tasks of the Party and the State. . . . Not for nothing have the political Catholics, above all, realized the importance of teaching the young and controlling their spiritual growth and character building. . . . [Thus]
>
> (a) the State ought to be the basic organizer and controller of the school system. In many cases, the private schools and institutions can be simply transferred from the Orders to the State. . . .
>
> (b) in many cases, particularly where public schools are available, private schools can only be regarded as superfluous, especially those which cannot be regarded as ideologically objective. The pupils should be put in the public school system, and the private schools closed. (Conway 1968, 366–69)

And, in a second directive 2 months later, he ordered that "[b]y the end of the year, no educational institutions should exist which are under denominational influence" (Conway 1968, 369)

To implement these directives, all government subsidies for private school salaries were cancelled, and many religious schools were closed or taken into the state service. Religious instruction in public schools was greatly reduced in its role, and teachers were urged to replace "Christian teaching with a 'germanified' religion" that omitted the Old Testament and inculcated loyalty to the regime. Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg boasted that "The curriculum of all categories in our schools has already been so far reformed in an anti-Christian and anti-Jewish spirit that the generation which is growing up will be protected from the black [i.e., clerical] swindle" (Conway 1968, 182–88).

As a young girl wrote in her confirmation class, "In our religious knowledge period we have to speak about our Fuhrer and must learn poems about him. We do not need any poems or sayings about Paul or John" (Conway 1968, 182–8)

Postwar Reconstruction

After World War II, the confessional character of schools was re-established in much of West Germany, but not without conflict. Initially, none of the Occupying Powers was inclined to support restoration of the system that prevailed under the Weimar Republic. In its only official policy statement on the issue, however, the coordinating body of the four military governments stated on December 5, 1945, that

> In matters concerning denominational schools drawing on public funds, religious instruction in German schools, and schools which are maintained and directed by various religious organizations, the appropriate allied authority should establish in each zone a provisional regulation adapted to the local traditions, taking into account the wishes of the German population in so far as these wishes can be determined. . . . In any case, no school drawing on public funds should refuse to children the possibility of receiving religious instruction, and no school drawing on public funds should make it compulsory for a child to attend classes for religious instruction. (Spotts 1973, 58n)

In the Soviet Zone (now the German Democratic Republic) private schools were banned and religious instruction in public schools was greatly restricted though not forbidden. The American, British, and French authorities were inclined to take the same position, but backed down in the face of strong opposition from the Catholic Church and permitted confessional schools in areas where referenda showed that they were desired. When such plebiscites were held, in 1946 and 1947, they showed strong support for confessional schools among Catholics and for nonconfessional schools by Protestants, except for those living in Catholic areas (Spotts 1973, 212).

The success of demands to restore confessional schooling was furthered by the fact that, for many, the churches (for all their weaknesses) were the only institution in German life to emerge with some honor left from the period of Nazi rule. They "were tacitly recognized as the sole institutions above direct military control . . . and as exempt from "reorientation" into directions determined in Washington, London, or Paris" (Spotts 1973, 55). This unique position enabled them to resist the desire of the American (though not that of the Soviet!) Occupation to de-Nazify Germany through a fundamental reorientation of schooling.

In the three zones that became West Germany, the political Left called for "a unified, public school system with clear separation of Church and School" (Herrlitz, Hopf and Titze 1986, 142). For most Social Democrats, schooling was a key to social reconstruction, and confessional differences represented an impediment to achieving its full effect.

The reaction of Protestant leadership to the excesses of the Nazi regime was one of repentance "in a solidarity of guilt" with the German people. "We condemn ourselves because we did not believe more courageously, did not pray more devotedly, did not believe more joyously, and did not love more deeply," they proclaimed in 1945. In this spirit, they were ready to call into question the Church's traditional understanding of itself as an ally of the State, and thus the extensive cooperation between the two upon which state-supported and -managed confessional schooling rested. From this perspective the nonconfessional school could be seen as representing progress away from churchiness toward an effective engagement with the secular world (Spotts 1973, 11, 212).

Among Catholic leadership, by contrast, the lesson of the Nazi period was precisely the importance of maintaining their Church's independence in providing education. Until about 1960, there was considerable self-congratulation on the part of the Catholic Church about its record of resisting the Nazis; Pope Pius XII cited the struggle to maintain confessional schools as a primary evidence for this resistance. The bishops saw no need to apologize for efforts to protect their flocks from the threats of atheism and Marxism in the postwar world. As political leaders worked to draw up West Germany's Constitution, in 1948, Catholic leaders pressed for a recognition of the right of parents to demand confessional schooling for their children (Spotts 1973, 90, 184–86).

In reaction against Nazi education policy and its equation of "ideological objectivity" or neutrality with a totalitarian State pedagogy, the Constitution adopted in 1949 assigned no authority for education to the national government. Articles 6 and 7 affirmed parent rights and provided that religious instruction would be an integral part of public schooling, though with a right of excusal. Despite efforts by the Catholic Church, however, the decision of whether to organize those schools on a confessional basis was left up to State governments, thus making it likely that only nonconfessional schools would be provided in predominantly Protestant areas (Lundgreen 1981, 2:26).

In the Frankfurt-am-Main area (Hesse), with the strongest liberal and nonconfessional tradition of education in Germany, the American "common school" model was followed most closely. This arrangement had two aspects: on the one hand, a continuation of the interdenominational character of elementary education, with a gradually diminishing religious content, and, on the other, the comprehensive, nonselective model of lower secondary education, or Gesamtschule (Tent 1982, 170–72; see also Ertel, Kilz, and Mettke 1980).

The sometimes heavy-handed efforts of American educators working in the Occupation Government to impose American forms of schooling—in the interest of "re-educating" an entire nation—aroused strong resistance on the part of many who had also opposed Nazi measures to achieve uniformity. Future Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, a Catholic, pointed out in a 1946 speech that

> The resolution of the issue of elementary education led in the past to bitter conflict among the political parties, until [the compromises reached under the Weimar Republic]. . . . The confessional schools based on these compromises were abolished by the National Socialist Government in 1939 through illegal implementation of the so-called German Common School. What should happen now? In every other sphere the illegalities of the National Socialist Government are being abolished. The earlier legal situation is being re-established. We want that for elementary schools as well. It is unacceptable to validate precisely that illegality of the Nazis experienced as painful by the broadest sections of the population. Therefore we call for the restoration of the confessionally organized elementary schools. (Herrlitz, Hopf, and Titze, 145f)

The American model of a common public school, dependent exclusively on State and local government and ignoring confessional differences, seemed to some Germans uncomfortably close to the Nazis' German Community School.

In Bremen, similar to Hesse in its liberal school policies, the draft state constitution stated that the "public schools are community (nonconfessional) schools where an undenominational instruction in Bible history is given." Pressure from Protestant and Catholic leaders, however, led to constitutional guarantees of the rights of confessional schools and of the explicitly Christian character of religious instruction in public schools (Tent 1982, 206f).

In Bavaria, the state with the most conservative and Catholic influence, an initial effort was made with American support to implement interdenominational Simultanschulen in place of restoring confessional schools, but it encountered such determined opposition that the attempt was abandoned and the Bavarian Constitution guaranteed a right to confessional education (Tent 1982, 112, 127, 139; Spotts 1973, 86).

Public confessional schools became the norm in three Catholic Laender, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Bavaria. Baden and the Protestant Laender (including the City of West Berlin) opted for nonconfessional schools, while making liberal provision for public funding of private confessional schools.

The Protestant churches have made much less use than has the Catholic Church of the opportunity provided in most West German communities to insist upon confessional schools. In 1965, for example, 17 percent of public elementary schools were Protestant compared with 40 percent that were Catholic and 43 percent nonconfessional or other (figures exclude Hamburg, Bremen and Berlin). These statistics contrast with those of 1911, when 71 percent of the elementary schools in Germany were Protestant, though it should be noted that the heavily Protestant provinces of Imperial Germany are not part of the present West Germany (Lundgreen 1981, 2:42).

In summary, a diverse situation emerged after World War II, with five types of schools: public schools with a Catholic character, public schools with a Protestant character, public schools with some other distinctive world view, nonconfessional public schools, and private schools.

In Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein, and Lower Saxony (except in Oldenburg) all public schools have been nonconfessional, while in some Laender virtually the full cost of maintaining Catholic schools on a private basis has been borne by the Land. In Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Wuerttemberg, and Saarland, where "parents' rights" prevailed, the picture was mixed. In Saarland there were only confessional schools; in Bavaria schools were confessional except in a few large cities; in Rhineland-Palatinate two-thirds and in Baden-Wuerttemberg one-fifth of the schools were confessional. Thus, despite the federal arrangement, the large majority of Catholic children were in Catholic public schools and an additional number were in publicly supported Catholic private schools. (Spotts 1973, 219)

This accommodation of religious convictions began to weaken during the 1960's, not least because the convictions themselves weakened through growing secularization. The resettlement of some 6 million German refugees from the East in the aftermath of World War II had confused the centuries-old pattern of religiously homogeneous communities, as had the growing movement from rural areas to cities. These events—together with the creation of larger schools in the interest of efficiency and a modern curriculum—had the effect of making confessional schools less practical and less in demand.

Protestant leaders came out in formal support of nonconfessional schools in 1958, and through the next decade many schools gave up their Protestant identity. The Catholic bishops fought a rear-guard action, but with declining support from parents. Thus confessional public schools have faded in significance over the past three decades. A referendum in 1968, for example, overwhelmingly approved an amendment to the Bavarian Constitution that made all public elementary schools "Christian" or interconfessional, with some instruction on a confessional basis. Private confessional schools were assured full public funding (Spotts 1973, 228).

Where public confessional schools continue to exist (as in North Rhine-Westfalia, the largest Land, where they are attended by more than one third of elementary students), they are operated by local school authorities and are subject to essentially the same controls as nonconfessional public schools. Public confessional schools may represent an alternative for unchurched parents who object for some reason, including the presence of Turkish and other minority children, to the local nonconfessional school. The confessional identity of the Catholic, and even more of the remaining Protestant, public schools may be limited to their periods of religious instruction. Clerical influence, in particular, is strictly limited.

Parents and the Schooling of Their Children

A study by the prestigious Max Planck Institute concluded that teachers have been more successful than have parents in asserting their rights against State domination of education.

> The teachers demanded, within a framework of state control, the internal administration of the schools and recognition of the special characteristics of the pedagogical enterprise [in contrast with other government services] and its institutions. The parents claimed the right of codetermination in fundamental questions of education (e.g., the choice between the "Bekenntnisschule" [confessional school] and the community schools having a general Christian orientation, between the comprehensive school and the tripartite school system, etc.) and recognition of their conceptions of moral discipline and the implementation of their preferences in this regard. . . . Most of the claims of

> the parents were in the end rejected by the state. (Max Planck Institute 1983, 86; see also Fend 1984, for the attitudinal differences among teachers in the different types of schools)

While the national government does not have authority over education in West Germany, the State (Land) governments retain substantial control that minimizes real diversity even among "confessional" schools.

> In spite of the prolonged efforts of the churches and the communities, in spite of teachers and parents, state control of the German educational system was reestablished even after the Second World War, in both East and West Germany. This was done not just in spite of, but also in some ways, on account of the churches, the communities, the teachers, and the parents: State control was supposed to prevent open conflict between their contradictory and particularist interests and to reconcile them with one another by political means. . . . Education reform in Germany, then, still means not a reduction but rather an increase of the state's control and intervention. (Max Planck Institute 1983, 86–87)

Article 7 of the West German Constitution provides, in wording close to that of the Weimar Constitution:

> (1) The entire educational system shall be under the supervision of the state.
>
> (2) The persons entitled to bring up a child shall have the right to decide whether it shall receive religious instruction.
>
> (3) Religious instruction shall form part of the ordinary curriculum in state and municipal schools, except in secular (bekenntnisfrei) schools. Without prejudice to the state's right of supervision, religious instruction shall be given in accordance with the tenets of the religious communities. . . .
>
> (4) The right to establish private schools is guaranteed. Private schools, as a substitute for state or municipal schools, shall require the approval of the state and shall be subject to the laws of the Laender. Such approval must be given if private schools are not inferior to the state or municipal schools in their educational aims, their facilities and the professional training of their teaching staff, and if segregation of pupils according to the means of the parents is not promoted thereby. . . .

> (5) A private [elementary school] shall be permitted only if the education authority recognizes that it serves a special pedagogic interest, or if, on the application of persons entitled to bring up children, it is to be established as an interdenominational or denominational or ideological school and a state or municipal [elementary school] of this type does not exist in the community. (Coons 1986b, 15–16)

This is clearly a framework within which considerable diversity and parent choice could flourish, but only to the extent that the educational authorities of each Land are flexible in exercising their role of oversight.

The Right to Private Schooling

Private schools in West Germany serve about 5 percent of the students of compulsory school age, and the right to establish and operate such schools is guaranteed by the Constitution. Private schools that serve students of compulsory school age are subject to close government supervision. They must meet public school standards in all respects, and they cannot—at least in principle—have the effect of segregating students according to the means of their parents (Max Planck Institute 1983, 101–2).

Controversy has recently arisen over the conditions under which parents have a right to make choices for the education of their children.

> In several of the Laender government funding is provided to private schools at some proportion of that provided to public schools. Recent litigation has tested whether this support is a matter of discretion or of right. A 1984 case in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, was decided by the Federal Administrative Court against a private school which claimed that its 85 percent subsidy was arbitrary since law would have permitted it to be as high as 98 percent in case of financial need. The Court found that there was no constitutional guarantee for any particular private school but only for private education in general. (Coons 1986)

In contrast to this narrow ruling, the Federal Constitutional Court issued, in April 1987, a ruling that went further than ever before to assert a right to publicly funded private education.

The case was brought by several State-approved private schools in Hamburg that had been receiving a public subsidy at 25 percent of the costs of comparable public schools. The private schools pointed out that they were having difficulty surviving with this level of support, and that confessional schools in Hamburg were receiving a 77 percent subsidy. The government responded that "the function of private schools consists of the widening and enrichment of the public school system through alternative offerings." Experience had shown that the greatest demand for such alternatives was for confessional schools on the one hand and for "reform-pedagogical" schools on the other.

> The higher support for confessional and world view schools rests in the end on their reliance [upon this support] developed through many years of constant demand. Confessional schools have always played a special role in the German educational system. For this reason, but also as a matter of duty, in order to make up for the closing of the confessional schools in 1939, Hamburg gave them a high level of support in the years after the War. (Bundesverfassungsgericht 1987, 12)

The Federal Constitutional Court concluded that Hamburg could not treat the support of private schools as a matter of its absolute discretion, so that it could make them prosper or decline as seemed best. The Constitution recognized a right to found private schools, as well as for the Land to regulate those educating students of compulsory school age. The basis for the right to a private school was the concern of the Constitution for human dignity, for the unfolding of personality in freedom and self-direction, for freedom of religion and conscience, for the neutrality of the government in relation to religion and worldview, and for respect of the natural rights of parents.

It was not enough, the court found, for the government simply to allow private schools to exist; it must give them the possibility to develop according to their own uniqueness. Without public support, such self-determination would not be possible. Private schools cannot, at present cost levels, meet the requirements for government approval out of their own resources. To expect them to do so, the court ruled, would inevitably force them to become exclusive schools for the upper classes (Standes-oder Plutokratenschulen). But this was precisely what the Constitution, and the Weimar Constitution before it, was concerned to avoid by the requirement that private schools could not lead to economic segregation. Private schools must remain accessible for all, not in the sense that they must accept every qualified student, but in the sense that economic circumstances are not a barrier to attendance (Bundesverfassungsgericht 1987, 30–32).

> Only when [private schooling] is fundamentally available to all citizens without regard to their personal financial situ-

> ations can the [constitutionally] protected educational freedom actually be realized and claimed on an equal basis by all parents and students. . . . This constitutional norm must thus be considered as a mandate to lawmakers to protect and promote private schools. (Bundesverfassungsgericht 1987, 35)

It is not only the Constitutional Court that is asserting the rights of parents to educational choice. In the same month (April 1987), the voters in Hesse, the Land that has done most to implement the comprehensive model of secondary education, repudiated the Social Democrats who had governed them for 40 years. One of the first actions of the new Christian Democratic government was to file a "Law for the Restoration of Free Choice of Schools" (Grefe and Greffrath 1987).

The issue in Hesse was not private schooling or religious instruction, but the freedom to choose a more academic or a more vocational program in the fifth year of compulsory schooling. While in the traditional structure of German education students are admitted to one of three types of school—Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium—in their fifth year, the Social Democrats in Hesse had required 2 additional years of undifferentiated, nonselective education in the interest of their egalitarian goals. Although such "orientation" periods have become common in European education, following the lead of Sweden and Great Britain, German parents have generally been willing to accept them only if they took place in one of the three types of schools. That is, the parents have accepted the possibility that some students will be switched to a different school type, but not the postponement of the more demanding Gymnasium and Realschule programs for the more academically talented students in the interest of educational equity.

The issues of secondary school structure in Germany, and the policy debates to which they have given rise, are extremely complex, and they will not be discussed here (see Ertel, Kilz, and Mettke 1980; Lundgreen 1981; Max Planck Institute 1983). What is notable about the situation in Hesse is that (whether right or wrong) parents have risen up politically against a model of schooling imposed by policymakers and education professionals. Taken together with the recent decision of the highest German court affirming a right to state-funded educational freedom, the Hesse election suggests that the structure of German schooling will have to find ways to accommodate new demands and energies from parents who expect to play an active role in making choices about the education of their children.

Conclusions

The primary antagonist of the State in today's struggles over whether schooling will be a government monopoly is no longer the Church. By and large, it is parents who are pressing e demand to be able to choose how their children will be educated, ith support from their taxes.

To the extent that religion continues to be a major factor, it is often onhierarchical groups with a fundamentalist determination to aply religion to every aspect of their lives—hyper-Protestants in the etherlands and the United States, strictly orthodox Jews in Israel, oslem fundamentalists in Western Europe—that have been most ggressive about founding schools. Such groups seek government pport for these schools only if it can be had with few strings tached.

The established churches, on the other hand, have wavered in eir conviction that they have an educational mission. The Church England, the United Church of Canada, the mainline Protestant enominations in Germany and the Netherlands have seemed uncerin about whether perhaps it would not be better for all the children their societies to be schooled together, with little explicit teaching religion.

This uncertainty on the part of denominational leadership, this kewarm support at best for confessional schooling, was shared by any Catholic bishops in the decade after Vatican II. Only during the 980s, in France and the Netherlands, has a new generation of shops begun to give leadership again in challenging a pedagogy aped by the State.

Some of this uncertainty must be attributed to the ravages of cularization on the European churches, but it may also have been ecisely the success of earlier struggles for educational freedom and blic funding that has accounted for a certain flabbiness on the part the churches. After all, publicly funded Catholic schooling has en widely available in Canada and Britain, in France and Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, and Protestant schooling has been available to the extent that the churches have not ceased to support it. The demand has come primarily from parents, many of whom (like the Catholic parents in Van Kemenade's study in the 1960s) may believe in religious schooling more strongly than do teachers in confessional schools.

As choice has become more an expression of individual preference than of group identity, the identity of "schools of choice" is increasingly at stake. Public funding for such choices is threatened, somewhat paradoxically, as confessional schools become less distinctive and more open to prevailing values in the society. After all, educational choice as a fundamental protection of freedom of conscience becomes trivialized when faith is lost and identity is no more than a matter of taste.

Blurring of the identity of confessional schools has become a major element in the debates in France and the Netherlands, and it is significant that the Unie "School en Evangelie" has devoted so much of its abundant energy and resources recently to the promotion of a sharper profile for Protestant schooling.

A generation of parents without secure religious convictions and yet dissatisfied with the incoherence of public schools has created a boomlet for Waldorf schools (based upon the theories of Rudolf Steiner), Dalton, Freinet, Montessori, and other forms of schooling based upon distinctive values.

Although the religious stakes (except for the orthodox groups mentioned above) may have lessened, educational freedom clearly continues to arouse strong feelings and political controversy. A survey conducted by Gallup Poll France in April 1987 found that "freedom of education" was rated among the two most important freedoms by 42 percent of the respondents in Britain, 47 percent in Spain, 34 percent in France, and 40 percent in the United States (*Public Opinion*, January/February 1988). The much lower ranking (22 percent) in West Germany helps to account for the relative briefness of my treatment of parent choice there!

If choice based upon denominational loyalty is a somewhat diminished phenomenon (though asserted with renewed vigor by religious minorities in recent years), the same may be said of opposition to confessional schooling based upon a militant secularism, a foi laique. Apart from the United States there seems not to be among national elites the horror toward religious "indoctrination" in school that so embittered the debates during the century and a half before World War II. Even in France the cooling of convictions has been as evident in the secular as in the Catholic camp, although the latter recently has been showing signs of revival.

Struggle over parent choice in recent years has been less a matter of the conflicting claims to loyalty of Church and State as rival powers—the Church has retired defeated from that conflict, except in exceptional cases like Poland—than of the resistance of individuals to the claims of the State to know what is good for everyone and in particular for their children.

Governments themselves show some signs of losing conviction about the possibility of a state pedagogy realized through common schools. While the consideration of a "common curriculum" by conservative governments in Britain and the Netherlands is a move to expand the role of the State in defining the goals of education, the resistance to such proposals and indeed their essential modesty in specifics suggests that the old confidence in a single national model is no longer there.

The declining interest on the part of governments in a State pedagogy suggests that the real protagonists are not the State and parents but actually educators as an interest group and parents.

In each of the nations studied, as in the United States, teachers are highly organized and influential in the development of government policy. Since professional associations in education tend to be aligned with political parties on the Left, the advocacy by the Right of increased parent choice may be seen as a natural move to diminish the monopoly power of the Right's adversaries on the sensitive area of the schooling and thus the socialization of future voters. The determination to seize the initiative in defining the content of schooling emerges clearly in Margaret Thatcher's speech to the Conservative Party conference in October 1987:

> Children who need to be able to count and multiply are learning anti-racist mathematics—whatever that may be.
>
> Children who need to be able to express themselves in clear English are being taught political slogans.
>
> Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay.
>
> Children who need encouragement—and so many children do—are being taught that our society offers them no future. (*Times Educational Supplement*, October 16, 1987)

The assumption of Thatcher's government has been that parents were its natural allies in taking control of the content of schooling away from leftist educators.

For all the political maneuvering over parent choice, there may be much less at stake, in one sense, than is commonly supposed by both sides in the ongoing controversies.

No real evidence exists, after all, that confessional schooling has a socially divisive effect; I have made a special effort to find research on this issue, with little success. Studies of the effects of Catholic schooling in the United States point to limited and generally benign effects. The dire predictions of "two nations," so often heard in the 19th century and into the 1930s, have not been confirmed by experience. Linguistic divisions, as in Belgium and Canada, have been far more threatening to national unity than have those—arguably—maintained by confessional schooling.

Nor is it clear, on the other hand, that religiously neutral public schooling is as destructive of faith as the advocates of confessional schooling have feared. Here the continued strength of religious loyalties in the United States, with more than 90 percent of students attending nonconfessional schools, should be compared with the greater degree of secularization in the nations of Western Europe that provide religious teaching in most public schools. The Gallup Poll mentioned above found that 53 percent of Americans but only 17 percent of Britons put "freedom of religious worship" among the two most important freedoms; this suggests that the almost universal religious observances and instruction in British schools may have done little to enhance support for the practice of religion.

To be fair, the routinized and half-hearted religious teaching provided by many confessional schools that have been largely assimilated into state educational systems does not represent accurately the potential of education based upon religious conviction. The fact remains that coherent and effective confessional schooling is something that, under the pressures of modernity, must continually be worked at and can in no sense be ensured by government funding, even under the most unrestrictive terms.

In short, this survey suggests that public funding of nongovernmental schooling is neither destructive of national loyalties nor a guarantee of religious loyalties.

If such ultimate concerns are not truly at stake in the debates over parent choice, should the balance in democractic policymaking not tip toward freedom and respect for diversity?

Finally, this survey brings confirming evidence to several conflicting positions in the controversies over public funding for nonpublic schools.

For those who believe strongly in religious schooling and fear that government influence will come with public funding, reason exists for their concern. Catholic or Protestant schools in each of the nations studied have increasingly been assimilated to the assumptions and guiding values of public schooling. This process does not seem to be the result of deliberate efforts to subvert the confessional character of the schools, but rather of the difficulty, for a private school playing by public rules, to maintain its distance from the common assumptions and habits of the predominant system.

Even in the United States, after all, Catholic parochial schools have come to resemble their public counterparts in many ways, obvious and subtle. Public funding, public quality standards, and a government-determined syllabus greatly increase this impact in other countries.

On the other hand, a significant difference seems to exist between those systems in which publicly assisted confessional schools can select their own staff, and those in which they cannot; private schools in France were wise to fight to maintain that right in 1984. The substantial autonomy of schools in the Netherlands is not always used to define a clear identity and sense of educational mission, but the possibility at least is there.

For those who fear that public support for parent choice will result in race and class segregation and unequal opportunities, the survey provides confirming evidence. Whether it be non-Catholic German parents using Catholic schools in the Ruhr to avoid Turkish children, or English parents demanding one Church of England school rather than another to avoid Asian children, individual parent choices clearly can result in injustices for the children of other parents.

Curiously, none of the systems studied has sought to put parent choice to work in the interest of more rather than less equity and integration, as in many American cities. Choice seems to be considered a matter of "all or nothing," reduced to the stark choice between social engineering and a free-for-all.

Surely there are other policy options in education.

Personal Reflections

This review of arrangements for, and debates over, parent choice of schools in other nations is not an academic exercise; it was prepared with American educators and policymakers in mind. So far as possible I have provided direct quotations from supporters and opponents of parent choice of schools and, wherever available, information from parent surveys and other research, so that the reader will be able to draw conclusions from the experience of other nations that may differ from my own.

Not too long ago, for example, a fellow-panelist at an academic conference on parent choice cited my paper on Dutch education to argue that choice was not significant in promoting educational diversity in the Netherlands. This argument was opposite to my own assessment of the same evidence!

As the U. S. Department of Education prepares to publish these papers for the use of American educators and policymakers, I have asked for the opportunity to step out of my temporary role of amateur researcher, describing the experience of other nations with an attempt at objectivity, and to make some concluding remarks in my own voice, as a practitioner deeply engaged in the issues that face American schools, on what we can learn from this experience about parent choice of schools.

For nearly 20 years I have been responsible for equity and urban education programs in the Massachusetts Department of Education. In this capacity I have been deeply involved both in limiting parent choice, when it works against educational equity, and in promoting choice, when it is harnessed to improving schools.

Parent choice is a massive reality in Massachusetts public education, with one pupil in six attending a school that enrolls its pupils on the basis of choice. In many other cases—perhaps the majority—parents make decisions about where they will live based at least in part upon a choice of schools. Massachusetts has ample experience o set alongside that in other states and nations, but it is different xperience, under different conditions and intentions, and it has been valuable for me to lift my eyes from my own tasks to see what is working and not working elsewhere.

In these remarks I am, of course, not representing the position of the Massachusetts Board and Department of Education, though both support parent choice among public schools subject to appropriate constraints required by equity and by the interests of all pupils.

The parent choice described in these papers, and in my comments below, does not include "choice" of programs and schools of various degrees of academic selectivity. Generally in such cases the pupil is chosen, not the school. Nor does my discussion extend to the elite private schools that serve the children of capitalist high-fliers and communist officials alike; that would involve a discussion of the sociology of class and how it is inherited. The concern of these studies is with publicly funded parent choice of schools that are available on a nonselective basis.

What Can We Learn?

1. Parents want to be able to choose the school their children will attend. Even under circumstances in which all schools are theoretically equivalent, parents seek to make choices. When choice has been available, parents resist strongly its removal.

France is perhaps the most striking example of the political furor aroused by an attempt to bring schooling more directly under the unifying oversight of the State, but in the early eighties parents successfully defended the right to choose schools for their children in Spain, Australia, and other nations not discussed here.

The advance of universal education as a result of government efforts has resulted, in nation after nation, in a generation of educational consumers who are more sophisticated about what they want for their children. The from-the-top-down strategies that worked so successfully to extend schooling to every corner of society grow increasingly dysfunctional as a means of responding to the highly differentiated demands of better educated parents.

2. Choices parents make respond to several different dimensions of schooling and can involve complex tradeoffs. Policy discussions and administrative practices too often take a narrow view of what motivates choice and what options should be accommodated.

In most Western democracies the right of parents to choose a school on the basis of their religious convictions, and to have that schooling supported with public funds, is legally protected. This right may not extend to all groups; thus in Canada the guarantees of

Catholic schooling do not always extend to other denominations, for historical reasons.

Few nations, however, make provision for parent choices on other grounds, such as the desire for a distinctive pedagogy or the cultivation of a talent.

Parents whose religious or humanistic convictions do not find support in the educational alternatives available have, in most nations, only the option of private schooling at their own expense. The Netherlands are an exception and have, for example, been forced by their constitutional guarantees of educational freedom to respond to concerns of immigrant Moslem and Hindu parents as other nations have not.

3. Secularization has not reduced interest in choice of schools. Survey data and the pattern of choices in the Netherlands and elsewhere suggest that, for many parents, the religious character of a school continues to be a positive factor even if their own level of belief and practice is very limited.

Where nonreligious alternatives exist that reflect coherent educational values, such options have no difficulty attracting parents. In many cases, however, alternatives are available only by going outside of the publicly funded system.

4. Fairness argues for publicly supported choice of schools. Every democracy, in the name of liberty, permits parents with sufficient resources to pay for schooling they choose for their children, which creates a strong equity argument for publicly sponsored choice of schools to permit *equal access to choice*.

The Scottish research shows that it is, above all, upwardly striving working-class parents, rather than middle-class parents, who make the most use of the opportunity to choose a school other than the one closest to where they can afford to live. The middle class, of course, are much more free to take schools into account in choosing where they will live. The equity argument for choice suggests that a social benefit as important as education, with its lifetime implications for opportunity and participation, should not be available on a different basis depending upon parental income.

5. Availability of publicly funded educational alternatives is most significant to minority parents. Their children are, in general, most poorly served by the schools to which they are involuntarily assigned, and they are less able to purchase private education or to move to areas with better schools. Surveys in the United States have repeatedly shown even stronger support for parent choice of schools among minority and urban parents than among the general population.

Immigrant and other ethnic and cultural minority parents may make great sacrifices to ensure that their children receive the schooling of their choice for another reason as well, to provide continuity with the parents' own beliefs and values. Growing evidence exists that "counter-modernization" is in full career in reaction to the high price exacted by modernity on personal satisfactions and family life, and that one of the forms this revolt takes is the desire by parents—especially those culturally on the margins of society—to exercise more control over the education of their children.

Although I have worked for many years for racial integration of schools, and continue to believe integration is essential to equal opportunity and to a healthy society, this study has convinced me that educational policy must find ways to respect and accommodate the desire of parents for schooling that reflects their own convictions. How to accomplish this without segregation and without abandoning our common goals as a society will require every bit of creativity we possess.

6. A "free market" in education has negative effects on equity, but these can be minimized through appropriate incentives and controls.

Many parents make educational choices which, while benefiting their own children, have a negative effect on the children of others. By removing their children from a school perceived as inferior, the most motivated parents reduce the energies available for the improvement of that school in the interest of other children. On the other hand, the same argument is made about those—including members of the black middle class in the United States—who move their residence from the inner city to suburbs, yet no one suggests that residential choices be restricted.

While philosophy and pedagogy are significant factors in parent choice, they may be less important than the pupils already in a school. Many parents are more concerned about the classmates their children will have than about the curriculum or teachers. Parents often want the fellow-pupils to be like their own children or as they want their own children to be. Thus uncontrolled choice tends paradoxically both toward class and ethnic segregation and also toward class and ethnic integration. Segregation because parents avoid schools with pupils they consider undesirable; integration because parents seek schools with pupils they consider desirable.

Both are illustrated in the Dewsbury incident, described in the chapter on Great Britain. English parents sought to move their children from a school with "too many" Asian pupils, thus increasing segregation. At the same time, an Asian parent moved her own child for the same reason, thus increasing integration. In Boston 20 years ago, "open enrollment" had the same mixed effect: there were thousands of white children moving out of integrated schools, and thousands of black children moving out of segregated schools.

7. Various strategies can be used to encourage choice to promote integration, while controlling choice that promotes segregation. This is common practice in Massachusetts cities, and has proved highly effective.

With continual effort in program development and parent information, well-designed programs can keep to a minimum the need for restrictions upon choice, while greatly increasing the incentives to choose an integrated school.

American policies to promote parent choice, unlike those in place and proposed in Britain, are by no means willing to accept segregation as a necessary cost. To the contrary, controlled choice has emerged, in the United States, as a more effective means than mandatory assignments ("busing") to achieve integrated schools.

Deliberately stimulated choice in the interest of integration has received little attention in Europe, though voluntary desegregation is at least under discussion in the Netherlands and Northern Ireland.

8. Parent choice has a positive effect upon the quality of schooling available. This claim includes the propositions:

That choice permits and requires individual schools to become clearer about their mission and their strategy for carrying it out, and that such clarity increases educational effectiveness.

The case for the educational benefits of parent choice of schools rests upon the generally accepted conclusion of the school effectiveness research, that clarity of mission and accountability for results are important elements of a good school. It seems a matter of common sense, that schools which must attract parents are more likely to be clear about what they offer and how they go about providing it than are schools which enroll their pupils involuntarily. Pedagogy and school climate are the basis of enrollment in the one case, geography in the other; the former are unquestionably more relevant to the educational experience of children.

Little research has been directed to this connection of choice and educational coherence in other countries; the only study of which I am aware is that by Liesbeth van Marwijk Kooy-von Baumhauer (1984), in which she found that Dutch secondary schools under nongovernmental sponsorship, because of their clearly marked identity, tended to be more effective than government-operated schools.

The lack of research probably reflects the fact that parent choice, until recently, has been regarded as essentially a form of accommodation of religious diversity and not promoted as a positive good in itself.

That choice reduces the level of conflict over the purpose and control of schooling, and thus encourages broad societal support.

Evidence for this proposition may be found primarily in historical and political-science studies, rather than in educational research. The accounts provided in my six studies do seem to indicate that other Western democracies have found it possible to reduce the level of conflict at the national and the local levels through a recognition that parents want and deserve different approaches to the education of their children.

Acceptance of diversity in the world views that inform schooling and in the pedagogy that different schools employ has not prevented the development of unified *systems* of universal schooling and of a high level—compared with the United States—of educational outcomes.

That parent choice of schools stimulates diversity and thus permits a better match of the individual child with an appropriate educational setting.

This is another question to which no research of sufficient breadth has been directed. Certainly there is no nation in which the diversity of elementary schooling even approaches that of, say, higher education in the United States, and the fact that European secondary education is more diverse than American secondary education has more to do with the persistence of various forms of interschool tracking than with a commitment to real pluralism.

On the other hand, the continuing discussions over school "identity" in the Netherlands and France, for example, reflect at least an awareness that the mode in which education is provided and the climate that is fostered in a school are by no means givens.

That competition among schools for pupils has a stimulating effect on the quality of some schools, and forces the ineffective to close; thus it serves as a rough-and-ready form of accountability for effort and results.

This theory is not one of the propositions I have advanced, but it has figured prominently in pro-choice arguments in Britain and the United States.

The functioning of parent choice in the Netherlands and other nations, based as it is upon the right of parents to select the *religious* character of the schooling of their children, provides a built-in protection against the functioning of a market. The assumption is that parents have a right to choose a less effective (by some standards) school that matches their beliefs and values over a more effective one that does not. Since parents have a right to a school that matches their convictions, such schools must be permitted to exist even when the enrollment level is such that in the United States they would be closed. The result is that the "market" functions in a very imperfect way.

9. Parent choice of schools—appropriately organized—can reconcile freedom for individuals and groups with coherent social policy.

Perhaps the gravest concern raised by the opponents of parent choice of schools is that it prevents the development and implementation of policies to use schooling for the benefit of society as a whole—which they assume government officials understand better than do individual parents.

These broad social goals include preventing the emergence of a caste system in which ethnicity becomes permanently linked with a social class position, developing habits of mutual respect and civic virtue, and ensuring that the future workforce—and particularly those for whom society will do no favors—is ready for the demands of the next century.

The further development of educational alternatives—especially those ethnically based like the Islamic schools in Britain and the Netherlands—would seem to threaten accomplishment of these broad goals of democratic societies. For that reason, educational options are often deplored by policymakers and those who compose editorials.

The hand-wringing over the dangers of parent choice would deserve more support if these goals were being effectively met by the prevalent practices of the official educational systems.

Unfortunately, they are not. Caste systems emerge, civility breaks down, minority children drift through school justifying the low expectations that are held of them.

Implementing systems of parent choice without reinforcing social caste systems requires a sensitive and consistent approach, one that takes the long view and at the same time is based upon the wisdom of parents about the best interests of their own children.

If Americans believe, as a fundamental matter of social policy, that schools should help to create a just and pluralistic society and reflect those qualities as well, then we must find ways of educating minority children and majority children together that are so demonstrably effective and so respectful of their convictions and values that parents will enroll their children voluntarily. Only as we implement such schools more widely will we earn the right to urge parents with strongly held convictions to turn away from separate schooling for their children.

To be respectful of convictions, however, it is not enough to provide a smattering of festivals and ethnic foods; parents look for schooling that is fundamentally shaped and informed by what matters to them. Distinctive, flavorful schooling, schooling shaped by positive convictions, and yet schooling that does not segregate or divide us, is the challenge. But that is the topic for another book!

The experience of other nations yields no conclusive evidence that parent choice has a decisive effect, either positive or negative, on the *quality* of schooling. Evidence is extensive, however, that choice may have either a positive or a negative effect upon *equity*, depending upon how the process is structured and what incentives are included for ethnic and class integration.

What parent choice of schools *does* affect powerfully is the satisfaction of parents, their sense of being empowered to make decisions about their own children, the accommodation of their deeply-held convictions about education. A properly organized system of parent choice can support the continuing health of those freely chosen communities, based upon shared values, that are so important to healthy development and continuing sanity in a mass society. Schools that have been chosen by teachers and parents alike are more likely to offer a coherent school climate and thus a setting for the development of civic virtue and healthy personal identity.

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